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ISSUE 6

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine

Final Fantasy Tactics

PlayStation
TOMOTAKE.K

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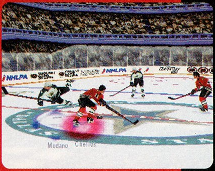
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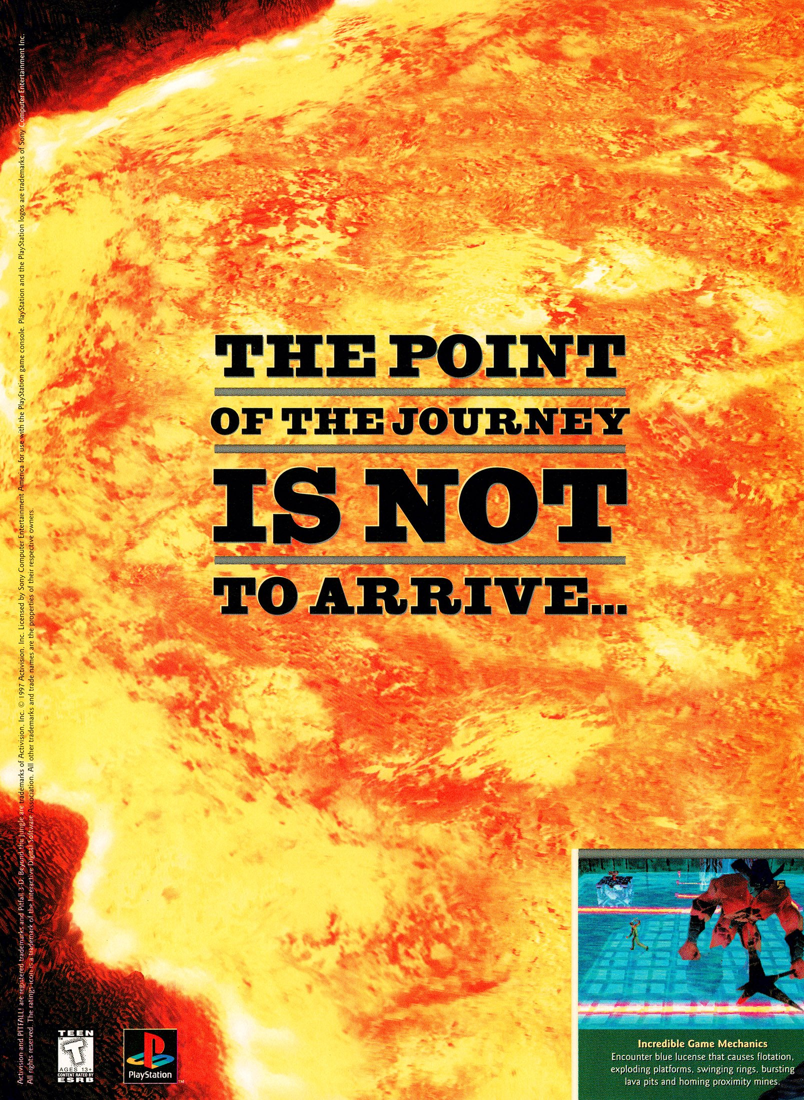
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FROM THE EDITOR

Orchestrating the *OPM* staff has encouraged Wat to dabble in other forums.

One of the more striking revelations that has dawned on me over the past couple of issues is that many *OPM* readers out there have never owned a home console gaming system prior to the PlayStation. It's natural and necessary for new systems to attract new consumers, but that usually means kids and young adults. A great majority of new reader feedback I receive comes from men and women in their mid 20s and up. When SCEA talks about broadening their audience, they're not kidding (no pun intended). With this in mind, the staff is taking extra care in making the previews and reviews more friendly to the new gamer. This means that the writers will restrain themselves from using overly "insider" gaming jargon while still satisfying the hardcore audience. Striking a healthy balance between the two is no easy task, and that's where we're asking for help. Whatever your age range, write in and tell us if certain articles are too technical or insultingly dumbed down, citing specific examples. With that in mind, I urge all *OPM* readers to take an active part in helping to shape the magazine into something that is as far reaching as the console it covers.

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Editor in Chief

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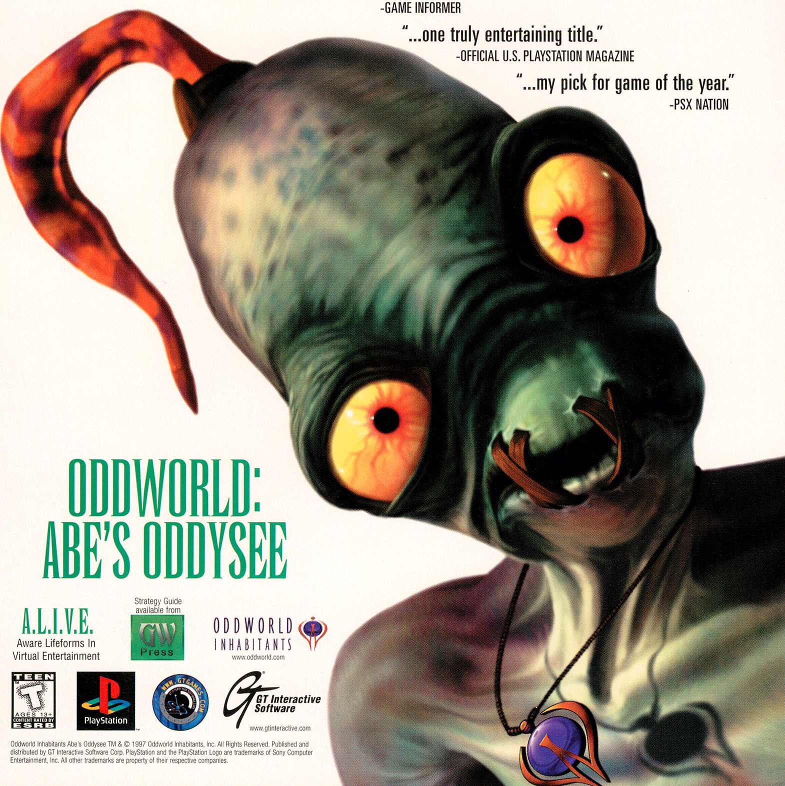

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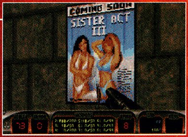
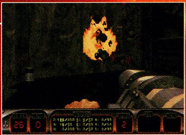
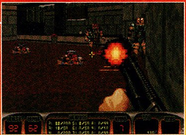


Laugh while you frag, from Hollywood to outerspace!



Bag some aliens with over a dozen hi-tech weapons!



An all-out overload of non-stop carnage!

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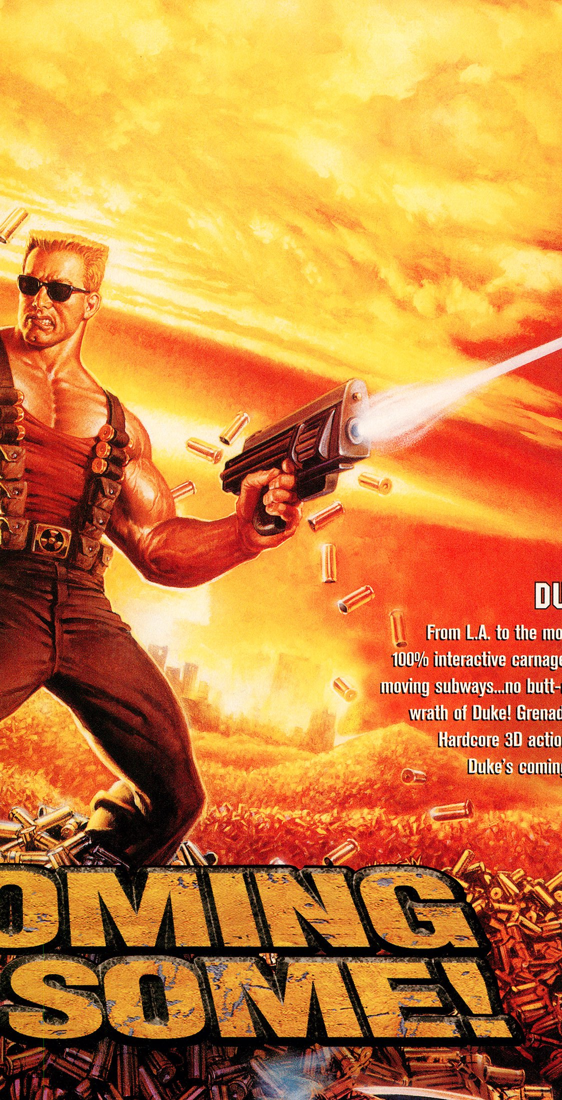
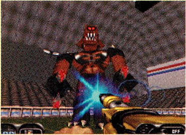
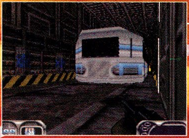
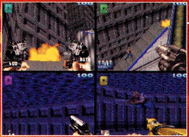



Big weapons and bigger bosses for a fun-filled fragfest!


Earthquakes, exploding buildings and working subways!


Four-player, split-screen Dukematch action.

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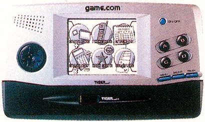

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38 Reversals

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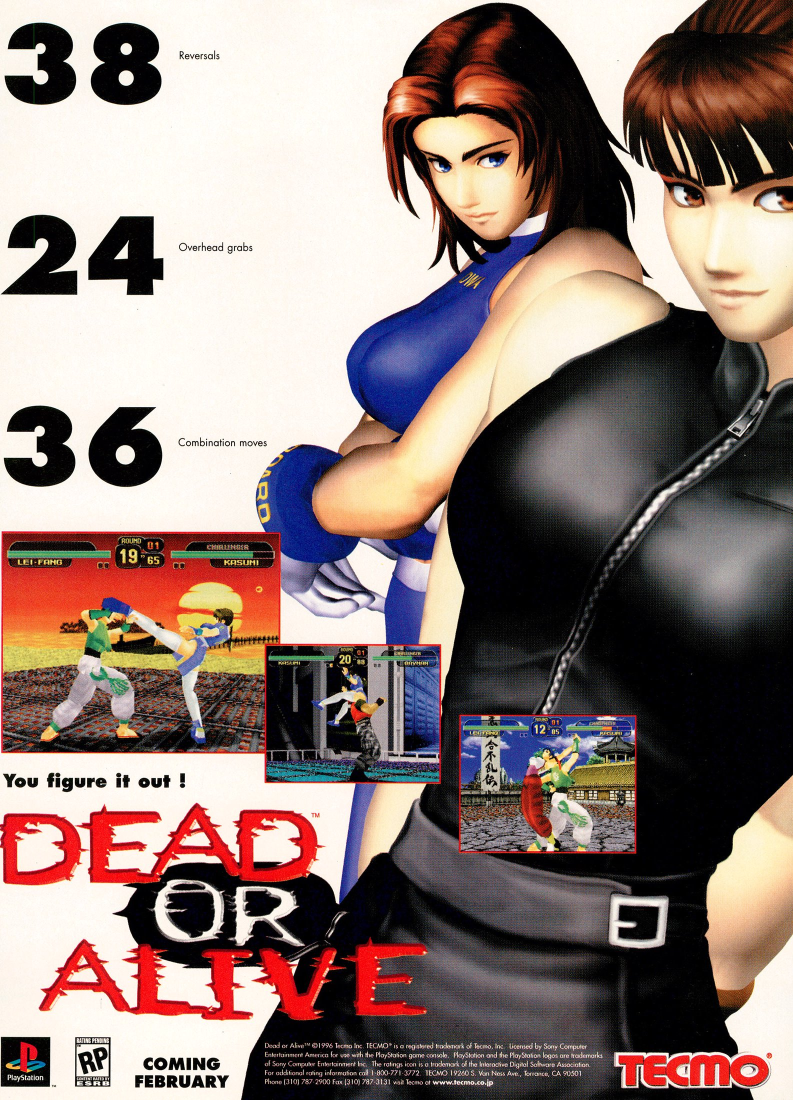

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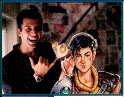
A Look Ahead



We polled some of the industry' biggest names to get their thoughts on the PlayStation's coming year.

100

Final Fantasy Tactics

Algus
...My family was once respected like the Beoulves.

Master strategist Dave Malec offers some much-needed guidance to help you through this complex title.

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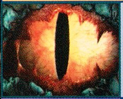
Resident Evil 2



We held off on our strategy guide until next month, which gave us plenty of time to review this chilling game.

78

Alundra, part 2

We put the finishing touches in to help you through the final areas of this huge RPG from Working Designs.

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PlayStation Top 20

This month's section offers readers the opportunity to speak their minds—and maybe win a game from ASC!

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U.S. PlayStation owners say they're sick and tired of Japanese gamers keeping the best games for themselves!

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A playable Bloody Roar highlights this month's redesigned demo CD.

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We take an in-depth look at Diablo, Grand Theft Auto and more.

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This month features the quirky Tonba and the hyper Critical Blow.

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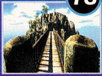

Our reviewers delve into the world of Riven: The Sequel to Myst and the just plain odd universe of Skullmonkeys.

PS strategy

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It's role-player's heaven this month with a helpful strategy for Final Fantasy Tactics and part two of our Alundra guide.

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We've got codes and cheats to help you wreak havoc in Nuclear Strike, monkey around in Courier Crisis, and rage with One.

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This month's g.e.a.r. has coverage of the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas as well as our usual collection of animé and nifty gadgets.

PlayStation News

a monthly wrap-up of all the information for your favorite system

A Touch of Darkness

Heart of Darkness is picked up by Interplay

The long-delayed title from Infogrames/Amazing Studio will finally see the light of day on the PlayStation. Interplay announced that they have entered into a joint venture with Infogrames to publish the title in North America with the latter retaining the European release rights. Heart of Darkness is an action/adventure platform game and is scheduled to ship sometime this spring. "The best way to describe Heart of Darkness is that it's more like an interactive animated film than anything else," says Brian Fargo, CEO of Interplay. "The game has a *Toy Story*-esque look to it mixed with fast-paced and challenging puzzles that gamers desire." Look for more information next month in *OPM*.

Interplay™

Super RPG Madness

Working Designs brings Lunar the Silver Star to the PlayStation

Recently, Japanese developers Game Arts have announced that they are working on a PlayStation rev of their most popular title, which has been picked up by Working Designs for domestic release. Lunar the Silver Star is a great RPG known for its emotional story and humor (thanks to Working Designs' U.S. translations) and currently has two chapters with a few off-shoot titles. The only versions of Lunar that U.S. audiences have seen appeared on the Sega CD system (part one and two) a few years back. The PS version is graphically enhanced and contains new stories and cinemas. The title is scheduled for release sometime in the summer with August being the target month. In other WD news, they have revealed that they will be releasing an action-platform game later in the year as well as another RPG around Christmas.

Tidbits

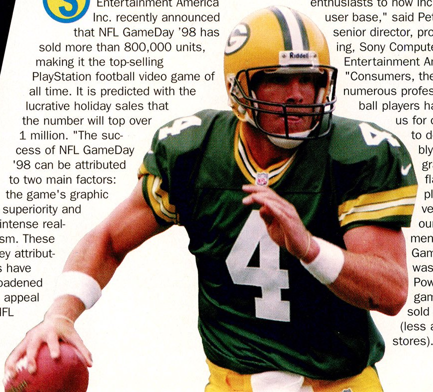
Delay

SCEA has announced that Cardinal Syn which was originally slated for a February release, has been pushed back to June. The extra time will allow more thorough play testing and hopefully ensure a top-notch title. Eidos has also stated that Ninja will also need more development time and is now expected to ship early summer.

GameDay '98 Breaks Records

The SCEA title becomes the best-selling PS football game of all time.

Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. recently announced that NFL GameDay '98 has sold more than 800,000 units, making it the top-selling PlayStation football video game of all time. It is predicted with the lucrative holiday sales that the number will top over 1 million. "The success of NFL GameDay '98 can be attributed to two main factors: the game's graphic superiority and intense realism. These key attributes have broadened the appeal of NFL GameDay '98 beyond traditional video game enthusiasts to now include a wider user base," said Peter Dille, senior director, product marketing, Sony Computer Entertainment America. "Consumers, the media and numerous professional football players have praised us for our attention to detail, incredibly realistic graphics and flawless gameplay. We're very proud of our accomplishments." GameDay '98 was one of the Power Price games which sold for $39.95 (less at some stores).



Shoots with One Hand

Square's hot shooting game Einhander is U.S. bound

PlayStation
EINHÄNDER
アインハンダー
SQUARESOFT

The impressive shooter from Square has officially been picked up by SCEA for U.S. release. This is great news for shooter fans as Einhander is easily one of the most exciting titles seen in a while. No release date has been announced, but a late spring/ early summer debut is possible. This is Square's first try in the shooting game genre and it's one that will turn heads.

Updates

The latest Konami rumblings

The promising RPG title Azure Dreams has been officially penciled in as a U.S. release for later this year. This unique title is unlike the big K's previous games like Suikoden or Vandal Hearts while some graphical elements do bear a resemblance to the latter title. The new Contra game called "C" is also nearing completion. This time out, the action will include both 2-D and 3-D play due to fan response. Of course the biggest news is that Metal Gear is getting closer every month and the current plans call for a fall release with September being the target they're shooting for.

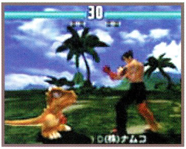
The Figures are Coming, the Figures are Coming

Bandai confirms U.S. plans for FFVII figures

Scheduled to arrive around or after February, the long-awaited Final Fantasy VII figures will be available at specialty stores such as Electronics Boutique. The only catch is that they will be available only as a set of four. Included in the set are Cloud, Aeris, Tifa and Barret which leaves out Red XIII, Sepiroth and Vincent. The set will retail for about $20.

New Tekken 3 Character Revealed

Joining the ranks of other animal characters found in Tekken 2 is Gon. As you can see from the picture, Gon is a "cute" dinosaur who possess tremendous power and is a new addition exclusive to the PlayStation version. Hopefully, Namco will add new human-type characters before they are done.



Name Change

Capcom has announced that Mega Man Neo will be renamed Mega Man Nova for the U.S. release. The reason for the change was to make the title sound flashier.

Best Game Ideas

Face/Off
A rendered Nicholas Cage and John Travolta directed by John Woo and programmed by Square. That's money in the bank

Starship Troopers
Command & Conquer-type play mixed with "dating" simulation.

Jerry Springer
You're a guest on Jerry's show where you have the option of talking about your disfunctions or sucker punching your mother. Your choice.

Note: These games are completely fabricated with the exception of The Spice Girls game.

Worst Game Ideas

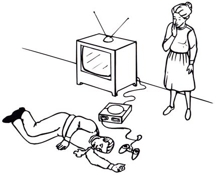
Lord of the Dance
Similar to PaRappa, you control the flamboyant Michael Flatley with button presses timed to catchy Celtic tunes.

Spice Girls
The fact that there is someone actually making this game is bad enough. Gary Mollohan is a die-hard "Sporty" Spice fan, so there'll be at least one person in line at Electronics Boutique.

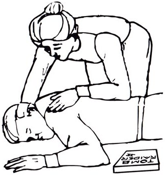
Beanie Babies
The bio-degradable collectibles hit video games! Reminiscent of the game Memory, you have to match the hard-to-find and expensive stuffed animals with no ultimate purpose. Just like real life!

PlayStation

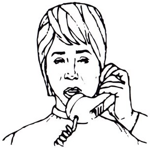
CPR for Gamers



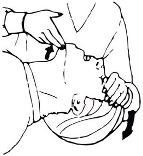
Assess the situation
Is the scene safe?
Has the game been saved?



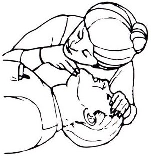
Check for unresponsiveness
Gently tap and ask "Are you okay, dude?"



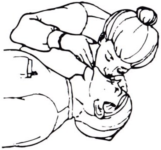
If they don't respond, call for help
If alone call for help first



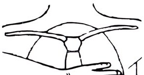
Open the airway
Head tilt, chin lift

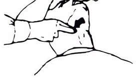


Check breathing (5 seconds)
Put your cheek over their mouth

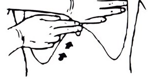


If not breathing give two breaths
Pinch the nose & breath in slowly

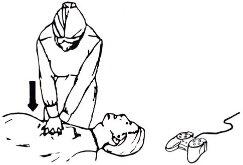




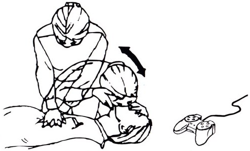
Check the pulse (10 seconds)
Check on groove on side of neck



If no pulse find compression position
Lower third of sternum (breastbone)



Perform 15 compressions
Depth: 1.5 - 2 inches, Rate: 80 - 100 per/min.



Give 2 breaths & 15 compressions
Perform 4 cycles (one minute)

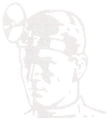
After 1 minute recheck vitals (breathing and pulse)

● If no pulse and no breathing	Perform CPR (15 compressions and 2 breaths)
● If pulse but no breathing	Perform rescue breathing (1 breath every 5 seconds)
● If pulse and breathing	Encourage victim to wait at least 5 minutes before restarting game

*To receive playing tips, call the **Eidos Hint Line (900) 773 - 4367***
Cost of call $0.95/minute. Must be 18 years or have parent's permission. Touch tone phone required.

EIDOS
INTERACTIVE
You've been warned.

www.eidosinteractive.com



Read this while you still have time to save a life.

Gamer First Aid

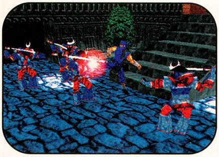
1 Stop the game.

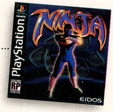
2 Call for help.

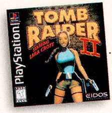
3 Act quickly. The victim may faint.

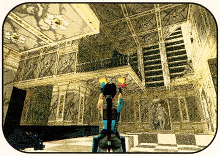
4 Get to the nearest hospital.

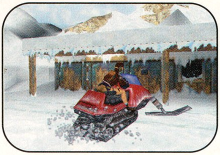
PlayStation
RP
FIGHTING FORCE
EIDOS

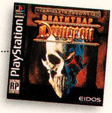



PlayStation
RP
NINJA
EIDOS


PlayStation
TOMB RAIDER II
STARRING LARA CROFT
EIDOS






PlayStation
RP
DEATHTRAP Dungeon
EIDOS

In most Eidos-related emergencies, your first response will be to finish the victim's game, potentially resulting in the loss of a lot more than a friendship. So before playing games like Tomb Raider 2 or Deathtrap Dungeon, study the enclosed first aid instructions. Then mount them in an easily accesible location near your PlayStation™. And rest assured that once you've assisted the injured, you can finish what their lame ass couldn't.

EIDOS
INTERACTIVE

You've been warned.

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Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine
DEAD OR ALIVE

Oops. Imagine our dismay when we received our advance copies of Issue 5 and discovered that a few key elements of our Reviews section (including a few bits of important info) had mysteriously disappeared at some point in the production process. For the record, Micro Machines V3 got a five-disc rating and uses one to eight memory card blocks; Beast Wars and Ray Tracers are for one player and use one block (each); and WCW Nitro and Power Soccer 2 use one block. We sincerely apologize for any confusion.

Future Vision

Dear *OPM*,

I've been wanting to purchase a PlayStation for quite some time, but now I hear there's going to be a new model. I would like to know everything on both models so I can decide what to buy.

Joshua Wirth
Haxtun, CO

SCEA has not denied that a new incarnation of the PlayStation lies sometime in the future, but they have stated that they feel the present model still has a long way to go before it runs out of steam. With the recent advances in graphics and gameplay, we have to agree that the best years of the PlayStation are still ahead. Still, rumors about a new model have been running rampant for months; speculated specifications range from more memory and a faster CD-ROM to DVD capabilities or even a new storage format altogether. Even the most liberal time estimates, however, don't place the release of the new system until the end of 1999 in Japan and mid-2000 in the States. In other words, don't hold your breath; enjoy the present system and the years of great games yet to come.

How to Get a Job in Gaming

Dear *OPM*,

Congrats on your great magazine! I was wondering how one could land a job anywhere in the video gaming industry. If I went to college specifically for a job in the video gaming industry, what classes would you recommend, if you even recommend going to college?

One other thing I'd like to say is concerning certain females in video games. I don't play Tomb Raider II just to see Lara run around in -20-degree weather wearing only shorts and a bomber jacket. I play it because it's fun and educational (I had no idea that flares will light under water).

Craig Hester
Minot, ND

Thanks for speaking up for the non-sexist segment of the video gaming public. As far as your education is concerned, it's definitely a good idea to go to college regardless of your chosen profession (that'll change several times over the course of your studies, anyway). Although it's certainly possible to get one of a variety of positions in the video game industry without a formal education, it's always best to have a solid foundation to build on. A focus on English or graphic design will give you a good start in the gaming press; computer science will help if you want to be a designer or programmer; and marketing covers most of what happens in between.

Sometimes landing a job in the industry is as simple as checking the classifieds for the city in which a given company is located. Many of these are found online these days, making it possible to search the listings by category. Also, companies often advertise open positions on their own Web sites. Try going down the Web list in our ad index (on the Next Month page) to see if anyone's hiring. Good luck!

How NOT to Get a Job in Gaming

Dear *OPM*,

I really like your mag, but don't you think Joe Rybicki gave PaRappa the Rapper an unfair review? A perfect score? Please. Not hardly. I rented PaRappa, and 25 minutes later I was almost ready to reinvent the game of frisbee. If Joe can't get it together, you can always hire me to do reviews. I don't give opinions based on what he thinks the public wants to hear.

"Joker"
Griffin, GA

Don't take my letter seriously? Won't give me some kind of answer? I'll just write two letters per week after I know that you've received this.

Well, we were going to hire you, but after that last bit we changed our minds. Sorry.

we want your input!

How do you like the mag? What about the design? Are we leaving anything out? Let us know!
To get special attention as far as design and content issues go, label your Letters or e-mails with the heading: *PlayStation Magazine* suggestions c/o the *Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine* at the addresses on the next letters page. We can't wait to hear from you.

Five-Finger Discount

Dear *OPM*,

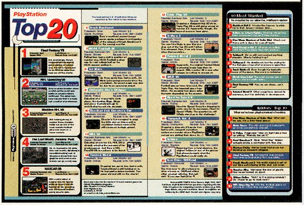
I love your magazine, but you shouldn't make it so easy to rip open the plastic bags. I've seen tons of vandalized copies of the magazine, with torn pages and missing discs. It was because the disc had been stolen that I had to wait until November to get your first issue! I wanted that issue so bad I had a nightmare about not getting it. Since then I have gotten every issue. I'm very proud of myself.

And how come the Top 20 are always so behind the times? In the November issue they said they didn't have time to put FFVII on the list although it was released Sept. 2! What's up?

Sincerely,
A Weird Reader
Code Name: Valkyrie

We've been brainstorming for a while to try to come up with a theft-proof packaging for the disc. As you may have noticed, the disc is no longer displayed on the front of the mag, but this is expected to only partially curb the number of disc-nappings. Readers, if you have any suggestions that might help solve this problem, please feel free to send them in.

The Top 20 is "behind the times" for two reasons. First, it takes time for TRSTS to compile the sales figures from their surveyed retailers; and second, it takes almost a month from the time we send an issue to the printer to the time it hits the newsstands. Rest assured, the data included in our Top 20 is more up-to-date than any other magazine out there.



"This Disc is Now Clean..."

Dear Sir or Madam,

I would like to know how I can clean my CDs and the lens on the PlayStation. I don't want to try anything that will break it. I will be grateful for any information you have.

Erik Coffin
Mesa, AZ

We checked with Sony Technical Support, and they emphatically suggested that you not attempt to clean the lens inside your system at all! Apparently, the risk of doing damage to either the lens or the mechanism is so great that fiddling with either might void your warranty. So if you do decide to do some spring cleaning, be warned that you do so at your own risk. As far as cleaning discs is concerned, Sony suggested a product called CD Wipes, which can be found at music stores as well as software shops. They said that other conventional CD cleaning methods may damage the surface of a PlayStation disc, so be careful!

A Burning Question

Dear *OPM*,

I recently read Issue 3, and in "It's Alive..." by Brent Butterworth, he says that "...if you can afford a big projection TV, so much the better." How can you play PlayStation on a big projection screen when there are warnings about ruining the CRT or the phosphorus staining a permanent image into the screen? And what is he using for a 7 1/2-foot screen?

Peter A. Rushkoski
Buffalo, NY

Certain projection televisions use a liquid crystal display (LCD) similar to the display on a digital watch (except it's in color, of course). These are apparently immune to "phosphor burn" and other negative effects of gaming. Among other kinds of projection TVs, whether the screen is susceptible to this kind of damage depends on the model. The best way to determine whether gaming will cause problems is to check the television manual or contact the manufacturer.

To the best of our knowledge, the only way to play on a 7 1/2-foot television is to use a projection box and a pull-down screen or some similar setup.

Until I read your magazine I thought sports games were the only thing worth playing. But thanks to your demos, my interests expanded, and I now proudly own Ace Combat as well as Final Fantasy VII, and my kids sit and play MK Trilogy. I look forward to being a devoted subscriber unless you go awry and start publishing less-than-adequate work, or until I get a heart attack, whichever comes first.

Al Trevino
Bolingbrook, IL

Thanks for the kind words, and here's hoping that both you and OPM enjoy long and "adequate" lives.

Did you buy a copy of our magazine that did not contain a demo CD? Simply send the receipt in an envelope marked "*OPM* Replacement Disc" to the address below with the name and address of the store plus your phone number and address and we'll send you the disc. Make sure you specify which month the corresponding disc belongs to in order to ensure you get the right one.

Also, if you have a malfunctioning or nonworking demo disc, call SCEA at 1-800-345-SONY. They will provide instructions to obtain repair or replacement services. For more information see this month's Demo Disc section.

Economics 101

Dear *OPM*,

Your mag is too expensive. I understand because of the disc, but [another magazine] lowered their price to $5.99 from $7.99 for a disc edition. I was going to subscribe, but not for $40! I can understand $30 and would like $20 but not [expletive] $40, sorry.

Hey, I already bought your first four issues, so I invested $32 on the mag.

If you print this (I hope you will) please don't make some smart remark about me needing only $8 for the subscription.

Name Withheld

You'd be amazed if you knew just how expensive it is to put together a magazine. The cover price takes into consideration not just the discs, but also the cost of paper, ink and the plastic polybag to hold the disc in—not to mention our salaries (although we'd do it out of love if we could find some other way to feed our families and pets). There's also a substantial sum that has to go to the three-martini lunches, chartered jets and dancing girls that are an integral part of any respectable video game publication. (The payoffs we get from companies in exchange for hyping bad games cover only part of that.)

Incidentally, it would cost you $71.88 to buy a year's worth of that other magazine you mentioned one issue at a time. And if you think you'd be interested in just six of the next 12 issues of OPM, then a subscription really is cheaper, by almost eight bucks.

Is it the Disc?

Dear *OPM*,

I have to be totally honest with you. I originally bought the first issue of *OPM* strictly for the demo CD. Having nothing better to do one day, I decided to actually read through the magazine. It was pretty good. So I went out and bought the second issue. Again mainly for the demo CD. Again I read the mag. Again I was impressed. Needless to say, I was looking forward to the third issue. Then it happened. I walked into the newsstand I normally buy my magazines from, and looked for the third issue. They only had one copy left! I quickly grabbed up that last copy. I was at home reading that issue, when it dawned on me that the demo CD was missing. I was pleasantly surprised when I realized that to me, the demo CD had become secondary to the magazine.

Official PlayStation Magazine
Demo Disc
SONY

Keep up the great work, and if you could print just a bit of my letter, it would finally end the great debate between my cousin and myself as to whether all those letters in magazines are real or fictional.

John K. Galler
Lone Jack, MO

You should have made a bet with your cousin. Seriously, this is one of the nicest letters we've received yet. Before we launched OPM, there were plenty of skeptics who said that if we prospered, it would be solely the result of the demo disc pack-in, that the quality of the magazine had nothing to do with the matter. Now, only a few months later, it's folks like you who are proving the skeptics wrong. Thanks for reading.

Rant of the Month

Dear OPM,

What's going on with Sony and Square? I know Final Fantasy Tactics and Saga Frontier will soon be out. And yes, we did get Tobal No.1, Bushido Blade and the masterpiece Final Fantasy VII. But lately I've been reading about some other games I know I would purchase if released here, but of course history repeats itself once again and most of these games will never see the light of

3 ways to reach us

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Lombard, IL 60148

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630 916 7227

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wataru_maruyama@zd.com

PlayStation

www.psygnosis.com

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CONTENT RATED BY
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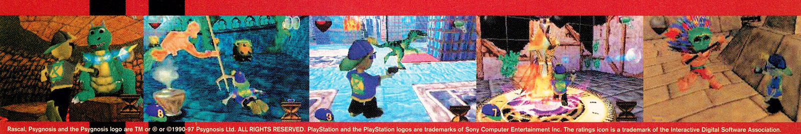
Traveller's Tales

GIVE HISTORY A WEDGIE

Historical bad guys are screaming, thanks to a sneaky kid named Rascal. He's on a mission to rescue his dad from an evil TimeLord. As he travels through time, he'll explore 18 different levels spread across past, present and future. He'll also have to zap Aztec gods, cowboys, and pirates within worlds that display **"...some of the most impressive 3D graphics in a PlayStation game..." (Next Generation).** So keep your eyes open. And bad guys, watch your backs.

RASCAL™

3-D ACTION
ADVENTURE GAME



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Your magazine is now one of the best out there. I missed out on your first three issues, however, and I was wondering if there was a place I could order back issues.
Chris Roi
Woodstock, Ontario

Back issues can be ordered by sending a check for $7.99 per issue (made out to the Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine) to Ziff-Davis Publishing Company; P.O. Box 53131; Boulder, CO 80322-3131. Enclose a list naming the issue(s) you want, and please allow four to five weeks for delivery. Call (303) 665-8930 if you have any further questions.

day in the States. The games I'm referring to are Tobal 2, both Front Mission games and Xenogears. Xenogears really upsets me because what I've read and seen of the game makes it seem like another exceptional Square title. Why won't it come out here? Religious overtones...what are you kidding me religious overtones! Here in the States priests are constantly on the news for doing really horrible things in society. Who are Sony and Square trying to please, or not offend? After all it's a game, just a game. Remember, it's the loyal customers who make PlayStation the success it is, and I have been loyal since Day One. And with the bad games Sony approved for release, you would think Sony would do anything to persuade Square to release every game here in the States. There is a reason why Square's games sell well in Japan; it's because they make great games. I think Sony would be foolish not to get these games released here, as it stands now I guess I'll be spending all my money at the import stores!
Ken Van Vliet
N. Arlington, NJ

It is widely believed that the most common reason for any company to refrain from translating a game for the U.S. market is that they believe the game would not have a wide enough audience. Keep voicing your opinions and you may very well prove to them that Japanese games do indeed have a market here. One way to make your opinions heard is to vote for your favorite import in our International Section. You could even win a free video from Manga Video!

Yes and No...

Dear *OPM*,

I have a question about a rumor I heard from a friend. Is there a universal PlayStation which plays both U.S. games and imports? Thank you for your time and keep up the excellent work.
Aaron Erwin
Uhland, TX

The blue developer's PlayStation will indeed play any game, but it is available only to game developers and the press (and very difficult to get ahold of, we might add!). The black Net Yaroze, Sony's developer's kit for the amateur game designer, will also play both Japanese and U.S. titles, but its $800 price tag means that it too is basically off-limits for the average gamer.

The Import Quest Continues

Dear *OPM*,

There is a code for the Sega Saturn so that if you have a GameShark you can play import games. Is there one like this for the PlayStation?
David Hubrich
New Lenox, IL

'Fraid not. The only truly fool-proof way to play Japanese games is to buy a Japanese PlayStation from a company which specializes in imports (which, come to think of it, is still significantly cheaper than the Net Yaroze mentioned above). Other methods, like the swap trick and the modification chip, can be pretty unreliable. Not to mention the fact that doing either will void the PlayStation's warranty, and in some cases can ruin the system for good. You don't want that.

Keep Dreaming

Dear *OPM*,

Let's see, another letter about Tobal 2. Yes, but there are rumors that Working Designs might translate the disc and release it here. What's the deal? Is it true or am I dreaming?
DAHMIN
Billerica, MA

This was the first we'd heard of this rumor, so we gave Working Designs a call to check it out. They laughed.
A lot.
Sorry.

CHUJI
21
EPON
STAGE 1

Haven't you always wanted to do it on the kitchen table?

Syrup
Sweetex

Orange Juice

THE ORIGINAL
Micro Machines®
SCALE MINIATURES

V3

Drive large.

Have you ever done it in the water? Are you any good on the billiards table? Do you find the backyard enticing? With over 40 unusual overhead courses, Micro Machines® V3 will change your perspective on racing. And because it's a true gamer's game, the tracks are short enough to remember, but extreme enough to repeatedly excite the experienced player. But don't worry - even the first time's good with Micro Machines V3. It's time to do it where you've only imagined before, with up to seven of your closest friends.

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Codemasters®

PlayStation™

KIDS TO ADULTS
K-A
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Letters

You write us and here we respond

Your chance to speak your piece

We've received a significant number of letters from readers who had subscribed to *OPM* but had yet to receive their first issue. This should be cleared up by this point, but in case there's still some confusion, here's the explanation. Although subscription cards were included in our very first issues, the majority of the first subscriptions began with the January issue; apparently, it takes a month or two for subscription orders to be properly processed. That being said, if you feel you should have gotten an issue by now, please call (303) 665-8930, or write us a letter, and we'll get things straightened out. Thanks for your patience.

Rant of the Month Runner-up

Dear *OPM*,

I'm sick and tired of reading letters from people complaining about the demo discs. "Oh, they need to be flashier!" "Oh, they need more games on them!" Shut up!!

What other magazine for console systems gives you demo discs to try on them? None!! I understand it's a new magazine, just starting, and things can only get better. I look forward to the 28th of each month to see what's next in news and demos. Yes, I know a subscription is cheaper, but money's too tight to shell out $40 all at once. In the meantime, $8 a month is fine. I'm happy with being able to play games before I buy them. It saves a lot of trouble.

My point is this: If having a magazine that tries its best, gives you a free demo disc with each issue, and is out on time each month is not enough for you, then it's simple: Don't buy it! Enough said.

Loyally yours,
Jesse Prusinski
Philadelphia, PA

Wow. We didn't realize that anyone felt so strongly about this issue. We certainly appreciate your enthusiasm, Jesse, but we do welcome any comments or criticisms our readers have.

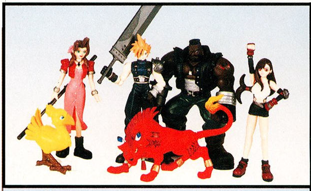
We get a great deal of mail here, and occasionally, some of it can be quite negative. It's easy to get discouraged when that happens, but the truth is that sometimes even the most mean-spirited attacks can have a positive effect. Working the kinds of hours we do, our work environment can easily become our own little world. We have to pay attention to the thoughtful comments of our readers—whether positive or negative—if we're going to keep improving our magazine and striving toward excellence. But it's nice to know that folks like you are looking out for our interests.

Go Figure

Dear *OPM*,

Can you help me find a place to call and order video game figures from games like Final Fantasy VII, Mega Man X, Dragon Ball Z and more?

Charles Simmons
Philadelphia, PA



We checked through some ads for game import companies and came up with a few names which might help you. At press time, a company called Game Express was advertising Final Fantasy VII and Dragon Ball Z figures, with prices ranging from $9.99 to $29.99. Their phone number is (212) 290-0031; their e-mail address is order@gexpress.com. Japan Video Games was also advertising Dragon Ball Z and FFVII figures. Their number is (626) 281-9282. Unfortunately, we were unable to locate a company which advertised Mega Man X or Rockman X figures; perhaps one of these places can special-order them for you. Hope this helps.

What year is it?

Dear *OPM*,

Greetings. This be the first time I hath ever written to a magazine, but this one hath particularly caught me attention. I am but a 21-year-old gamer who hath been playing video games since the age of five (aye, five, me noth [sic] kidding). Ye magazine is quite in-depth when it cometh to the reviews ye give. I really enjoy the comments and rundowns ye giveth all but too well, and ye rating system hits the very core if noth close to it. Such things art what I cometh to look for in a magazine. Me think ye art the best magazine up to date, and I shalt be awaiting every issue faithfully. I really hope to see me letter in thy next issue, for I shalt write again. Until next time I shalt fare thee all well...

Michael "The Black Knight"
Hampton, VA

Believe it or not, folks, we don't make these up.

IN THIS CITY, THERE IS NO RUNAWAY CRIME RATE...

...BECAUSE NOTHING OUTRUNS THE LONG ARM OF THE LAW.

In the 21st century, a license to kill and heavily armed, turbo-charged patrol vehicles are all you need to keep the peace. Just don't get blown to pieces in the process.

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- Patrol the streets at a breakneck speed of 60 frames per second*
- Bring in law breakers dead or alive (or barely alive) with high-powered non-lethal or lethal weapons like the Vulcan Cannon
- Maintain the peace with the Turbo Patrol Car, Bike or Wing – you're a crack shot from each
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- Call for back-up with 1 or 2-player split screen action on the Sony Playstation, or with 4-players via LAN on the PC.

* Sony PlayStation™ version only

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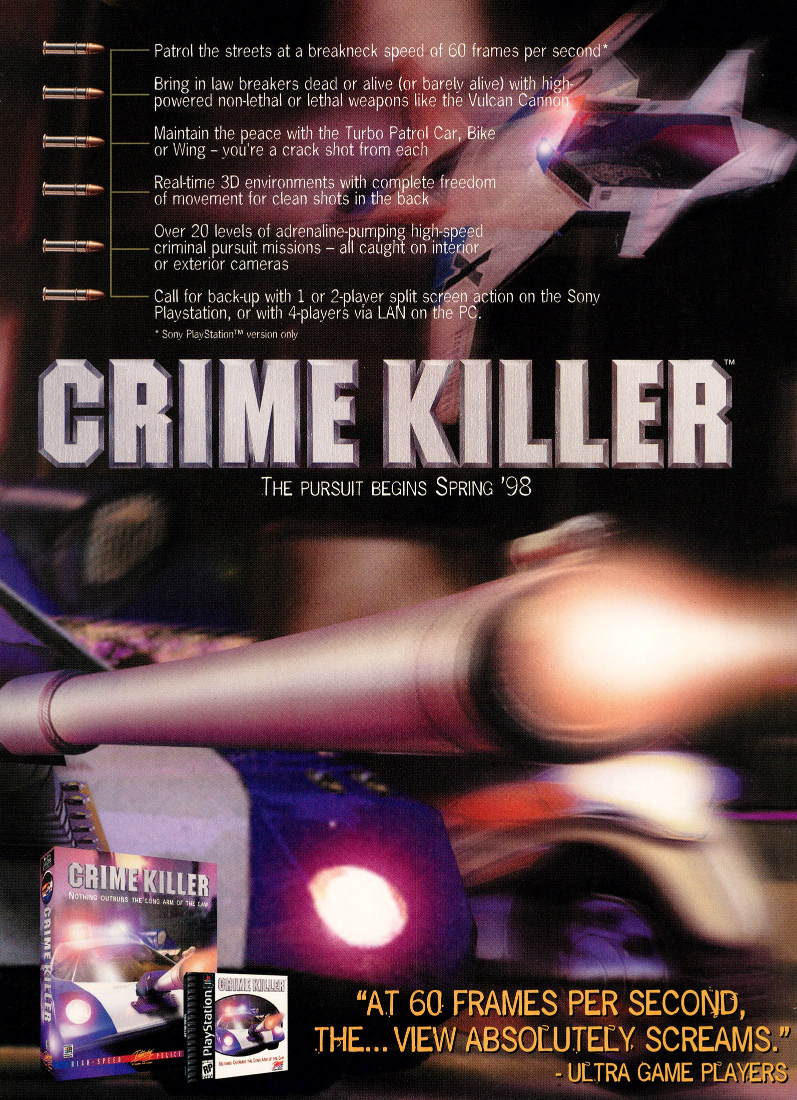
THE PURSUIT BEGINS SPRING '98


CRIME KILLER
NOTHING OUTRUNS THE LONG ARM OF THE LAW
HIGH-SPEED POLICE
PlayStation
CRIME KILLER
NOTHING OUTRUNS THE LONG ARM OF THE LAW

"AT 60 FRAMES PER SECOND, THE... VIEW ABSOLUTELY SCREAMS."
- ULTRA GAME PLAYERS

PlayStation Top 20

The best-selling U.S. PlayStation titles as reported by the nation's top retailers.

1 Tomb Raider 2

Publisher: Eidos **Last Month:** 4
Genre: Action/Adventure **Release Date:** Nov. 1997

Was there ever any doubt Eidos' intrepid heroine would climb to the top of the PlayStation heap? But can she fend off the impending zombie attack?

2 Crash Bandicoot 2

Publisher: SCEA **Last Month:** 2
Genre: Platform **Release Date:** Oct. 1997

Neither losing nor gaining any ground on Ms. Croft, Crash holds steady at the number two spot. Will Crash get to enjoy his day in the sun at number one?

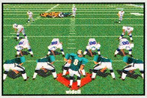
3 NBA Live 98

Publisher: EA Sports **Last Month:** 1
Genre: Sports **Release Date:** Sept. 1997

NBA Live 98 falls two spots this month; however, sports games traditionally have good staying power, so count on seeing this in our Top 20 for a while.

4 NFL GameDay 98

Publisher: SCEA **Last Month:** 3
Genre: Sports **Release Date:** Aug. 1997



Speaking of staying power, SCEA's groundbreaking football sim has been a fixture of our Top 5 since our second issue and shows no sign of letting up.

5 Crash Bandicoot

Publisher: SCEA **Last Month:** 8
Genre: Platform **Release Date:** Sept. 1996

Scores of new PlayStation owners must have snatched up this economically priced classic, sending it skyrocketing to this month's number 5 spot.

6 Madden NFL 98

Publisher: EA Sports **Last Month:** 6
Genre: Sports **Release Date:** Aug. 1997

Madden continues to rack up impressive sales, holding steady at number six. Will EA add polygonal players for Madden NFL 99?

7 NASCAR 98

Publisher: EA Sports **Last Month:** 5
Genre: Racing **Release Date:** Sept. 1997

NASCAR fans are known for their loyalty, and NASCAR 98's continuing strong sales certainly seems to support this.

8 Final Fantasy VII

Publisher: SCEA **Last Month:** 7
Genre: RPG **Release Date:** Aug. 1996

After a two-month reign at number one, FFVII fell to number seven last month and hangs in at number eight this month.

9 Jet Moto 2

Publisher: SCEA **Last Month:** 9
Genre: Racing **Release Date:** Nov. 1997

After debuting last month at number nine, SingleTrac's and SCEA's futuristic racer seems to have stalled.

10 Frogger

Publisher: Hasbro Int. **Last Month:** 14
Genre: Platform **Release Date:** Oct. 1997

Revived, revitalized and ready to hop, Hasbro Interactive's update of the arcade classic leapfrogs to our number 10 spot.

11 Jet Moto

Publisher: SCEA **Last Month:** 11
Genre: Racing **Release Date:** Nov. 1996

Jet Moto has been at our number 11 spot for the past three months. Not too shabby, considering the game is over a year old.

CHECKPOINT

12 2Xtreme

Publisher: SCEA **Last Month:** —
Genre: Racing **Release Date:** Nov. 1996

RE-ENTRY

Whoah! The aged sequel to ESPN Extreme suddenly regains a pulse after having Greatest Hit status bestowed upon it. Amazing!!!

Send your votes for the readers' 10 most wanted games to:
Official PlayStation Magazine
Attn: Readers' 10 Most Wanted
1920 Highland Ave.
Lombard, IL 60148
or e-mail us at: bob_conlon@zd.com

13 Test Drive 4

Publisher: Accolade
Last Month: —
Genre: Racing
Release Date: Nov. 1997

Another surprise, TD4 was released in November and appeared on our December demo disc but couldn't crack the Top 20 until now.

14 Cool Boarders 2

Publisher: SCEA
Last Month: —
Genre: Racing
Release Date: Dec. 1997

As the winter sports seasons winds to a close, Cool Boarders 2 makes its first Top 20 appearance at our number 14 spot.

15 Twisted Metal

Publisher: SCEA
Last Month: —
Genre: Action
Release Date: Nov. 1995

After a two-month absence, the original Twisted Metal re-enters our Top 20 at 15, but when will we get to see Twisted Metal 3?

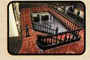
16 NHL 98

Publisher: EA Sports
Last Month: 17
Genre: Sports
Release Date: Sept. 1997

After dropping from number nine to number 17, EA Sports' excellent hockey sim gains a spot, moving to number 16.

17 Resident Evil: Director's Cut

Publisher: Capcom
Last Month: 18
Genre: Adventure
Release Date: Sept. 1997



While Director's Cut continues to scare legions of new PlayStation owners, the real nightmare, RE2, lurks in the wings.

18 Jampack Volume 2

Publisher: SCEA
Last Month: 10
Genre: Sampler
Release Date: Oct. 1997

Apparently lots of Christmas shoppers felt the economically priced Jampack Volume 2 made a great stocking stuffer.

19 The Lost World: Jurassic Park

Publisher: Electronic Arts
Last Month: 14
Genre: Platform
Release Date: Aug. 1997

Although lambasted by the critics, The Lost World: Jurassic Park demonstrates a hot movie license can still go a long way.

20 WCW vs The World

Publisher: T*HQ
Last Month: 13
Genre: Wrestling
Release Date: Mar. 1997

Despite falling seven spots, T*HQ's aging grappler continues to rack up impressive sales. Will WCW Nitro knock it out completely?

Source: NPD TRSTS Video Games, December, 1997. Call them at (516) 625-2345 for questions regarding this list. Note: No games for competing console systems (e.g. N64, Sega Saturn, etc.) were included. Overall sales figures may vary. Game descriptions are written by the *OPM* staff.

ASC GAMES PRESENTS

10 Most Wanted

As compiled by our attractive, intelligent readers

1 **Tekken 3** The only thing Namco is saying is that it'll be here sooner than you might think.

2 **Metal Gear** Definitely an early favorite for E^3 "Best of Show."

3 **WCW Nitro** Whether you're WCW or NWO, Nitro is just too sweeeeeet!

4 **Twisted Metal 3** SCEA refuses to confirm or deny its existence, but we've heard talk...

5 **Pitfall 3-D** Will Harry's first 3-D adventure be his best to date?

6 **Mortal Kombat 4** Can PlayStation handle this visually complicated brawler?

7 **Gran Turismo** A partial list of Gran Turismo's real-world vehicles has car buffs salivating.

8 **NFL Blitz** Midway's riotously violent pigskin title should make a killing.

9 **Parasite Eve** Moody, atmospheric—Square's latest should be a visual *tour de force*.

10 **Mega Man Neo** The Blue Bomber's first 3-D title will be headed Stateside soon.

Send in your votes!

A new winner is randomly chosen every month!

Submit your picks for 10 Most Wanted, and you could win a great game generously provided by ASC Games. Send your lists to:

PlayStation
ONE

Readers' most wanted c/o
The Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine
1920 Highland Ave Suite 222
Lombard, IL 60148

Editors' Top 5

What we've been playing instead of working

1 **Resident Evil 2** "Wh...What was the noise? Mad Dog, was that you? Joe? Anybody?"

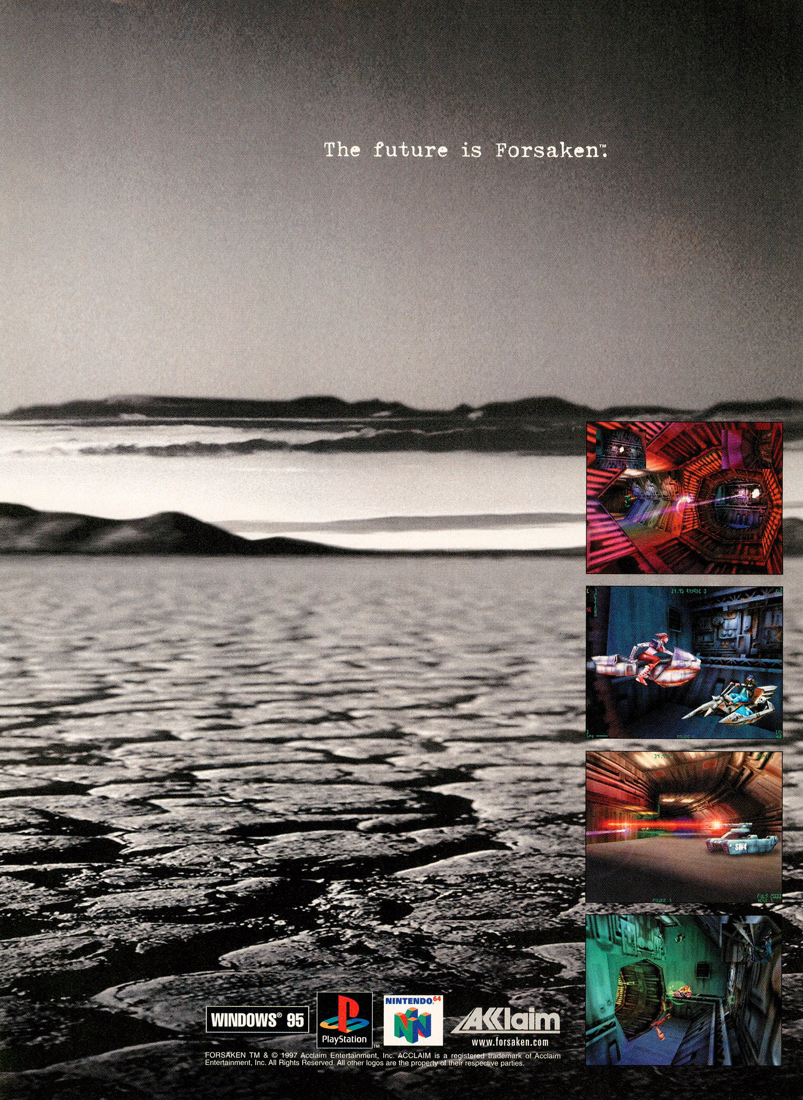
2 **Final Fantasy Tactics** This month's cover game had us all spellbound.

3 **Vigilante 8** Activision's one-level demo left us salivating for more *car*-nage.

4 **Riven** A fan of the original, Rybicki has been glued to this five-disc epic.

5 **Bloody Roar** Check out Dindo's review later in this issue.

FORSAKEN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up	jump
Rave Mode	△
down	duck
Beast Mode	○
left	move left
punch	□
right	move right
kick	×
R1	cancel
not used	L1
R2	not used
not used	L2

YUGO
RAVE
FOX

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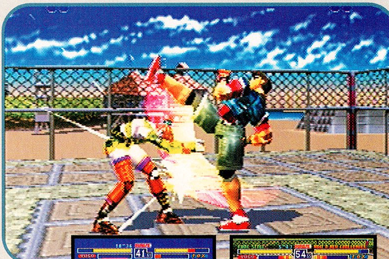
Bloody Roar

SCEA catches full-moon fever



YUGO
RAVE
41
FOX
3 HIT

Whoah! Notice anything different about this month's disc? We hope you like our new *Tales from the Crypt*-like intro and interface as much as we do. A special thanks is in order to everybody who helped make it happen. Next, those of you with really sharp eyes will notice we moved the controller commands box to the outside edge of every page in this section to improve readability, as Joseph Hauger suggested in our February Letters section.

The first playable demo on this month's disc is SCEA's excellent Bloody Roar, which we also review later in this issue. The last time this occurred (as you may remember) was in our December issue, which featured both a review and a playable demo of another fighter, T*HQ's Vs. We hope to do this as often as possible in the future, so you can decide for yourself how accurate our opinions are. What other mag lets you do that?

We first learned of Bloody Roar at last year's E^3, where it appeared as a surprise title in Sony's expansive booth. While the name has undergone a change (it was shown under the tentative title Beastorizer), the action is as fast and furious as ever.

How is the game best described? Well, if you locked Fighting Vipers and Altered Beast together in a room at the motor lodge along with a bottle of Boone's Farm, nine months later you'd have Bloody Roar. The game first appeared in arcades but made the leap to PlayStation courtesy of Hudson. Each of the game's eight selectable characters is capable of transforming into a beast with the press of a single button, which not only adds some visual sparkle but also affects strategy. The final Boss can transform a second time into a hulking creature that enjoys wiping the floor with opponents' faces.

Even though the button configuration is exceedingly simple, you can perform loads of crushing combos and advanced moves, such as counters and throw recoveries. The walled arenas also lend themselves to plenty of Fighting Vipers-style juggling moves.

Bloody Roar may end up giving heavyweights such as Tekken 3 and Dead or Alive a run for their money, and deservedly so.

YUGO
51
PRESS START
FOX

TRANSFORMATION CAN BE USED AS AN OFFENSIVE ATTACK.

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STATS

THEME	# OF PLAYERS	% COMPLETE	AVAILABILITY	PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER
Fighting	1 or 2	100%	March	SCEA	Hudson

Tactics Ogre™

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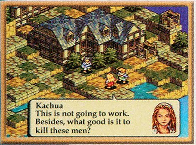
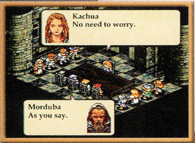
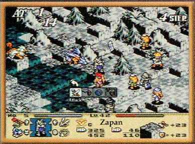


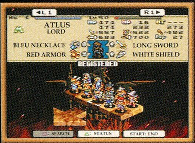
Kachua
This is not going to work. Besides, what good is it to kill these men?



Kachua
No need to worry.

Morduba
As you say.


AT 1/14
4 STEP
Attack
No 5
Lv 42
Zapan
HP 325/452
MP 46/110
+23
+23


L1
R1
No. 1
Lv 50
ATLUS
LORD
HP 474/474
MP 16/232
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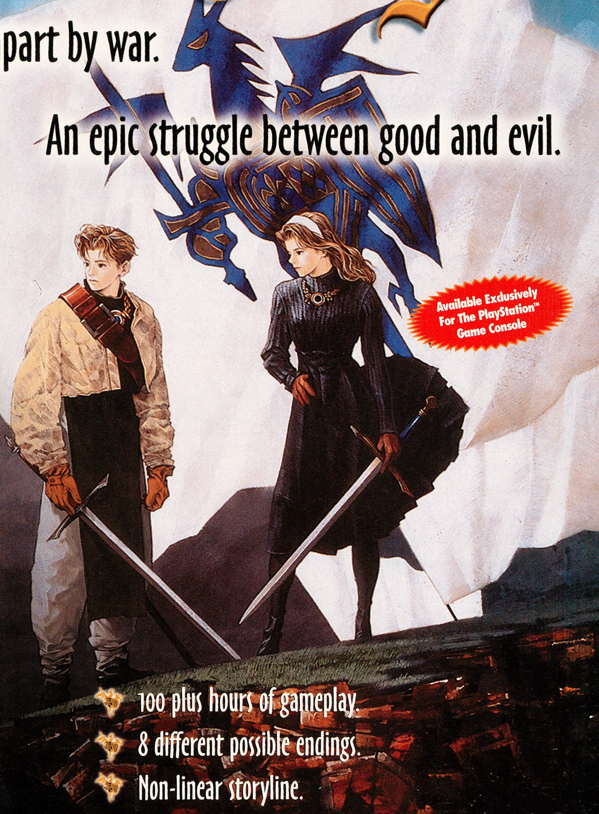
557
522
482
683
700
27
BLEU NECKLACE
RED ARMOR
LONG SWORD
WHITE SHIELD
REGISTERED
SEARCH
STATUS
START: END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Hare
Hare
Hare

Monster Rancher

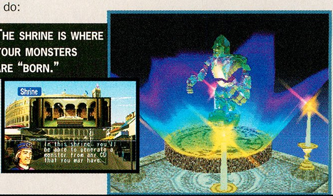
Like Tomagotchi with teeth

up	not used
cancel	△
down	not used
help	○
left	not used
not used	□
right	not used
accept	✕
R1	not used
not used	L1
R2	not used
not used	L2

Unconventional. That's the best way to describe Tecmo's Monster Rancher (a.k.a. Monster Farm in Japan), the first PlayStation game that lets you breed, train and fight your very own monsters! To do so, all you need is an ordinary compact disc—any type will do: music, CD-ROM, etc. You can also buy a stock monster at the market, if you don't have a CD handy or if you and a friend want to battle monsters with equal abilities.

Kind of like an overgrown Tomagotchi, your monster must be fed and cared for after it is created. Experimentation is required to discover the proper diet, disciplinary and training regimen.

Unfortunately, you only get to create a monster in this demo version. If you want to actually train and fight your creation, you'll have to pick up a production copy of the game.



In this shrine, you'll be able to generate a monster from any CD that you may have.

THE SHRINE IS WHERE YOUR MONSTERS ARE "BORN."

STATS

THEME	# OF PLAYERS	% COMPLETE	AVAILABILITY	PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER
Strategy	1 or 2	100%	March	Tecmo	Tecmo

Shipwreckers

High seas hijinks from Psygnosis

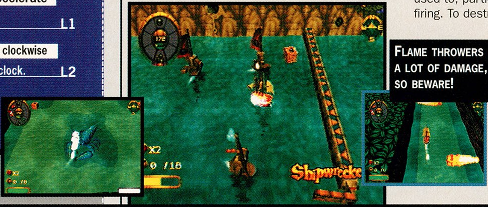
up	boost
not used	△
down	brake/quick turn
fire right	○
left	turn left
not used	□
right	turn right
fire left	✕
R1	accelerate
map	L1
R2	weapon clockwise
weapon anti-clock.	L2

Back in December, Shipwreckers garnered a three-disk or "good" score from Dindo, who liked the game for its speedy gameplay and numerous secrets. Others, such as art director Jim Cordano, just love it for its flailing seamen. Now you can check out Shipwreckers for yourself, if you haven't already.

The game harkens back to Psygnosis' early days, when, in the absence of fancy 3-D graphics or transparency effects, the European publisher relied on simple, yet addictive play mechanics and wicked level design to draw players into their games.

In Shipwreckers, you play as a the captain of pirate ship out to conquer as many ports as possible. To do so, you'll need to defeat or avoid a variety of man-made and natural hazards, such as enemy ships, octopi, bomb-dropping parrots and air ships.

Shipwreckers' controls take a little getting used to, particularly the different types of firing. To destroy enemies' ships quickly, try moving around them in a tight circle while firing from the side. If you catch on fire, head for the nearest waterfall. Be sure, however, to pick up any of your crew members who may have jumped overboard while your ship was in flames.



FLAME THROWERS DO A LOT OF DAMAGE, SO BEWARE!

STATS

THEME	# OF PLAYERS	% COMPLETE	AVAILABILITY	PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER
Action	1-5	100%	March	Psygnosis	Psygnosis

BREAKTHROUGH

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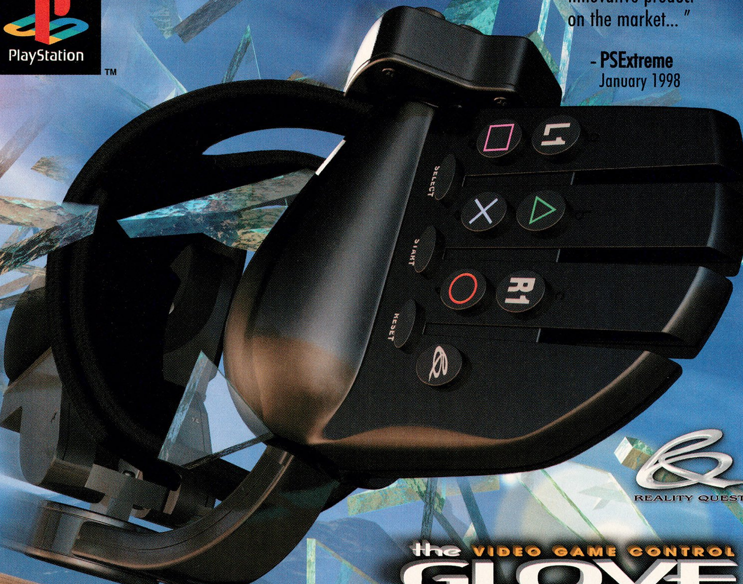

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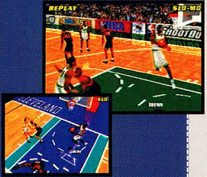
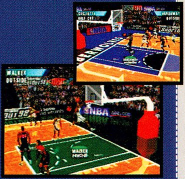




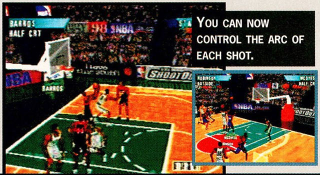
NBA ShootOut 98

Hoop it up with Barkley and Shaq

NBA ShootOut 98 is the first viewable demo on this month's disc. How can you tell it's non-playable (without loading it, that is)? By looking at the little Camcorder icon in the bottom right-hand corner of the Game Select Screen.

NBA ShootOut 98 has all 29 and over 350 players—including Barkley and Shaq! The game also has four times the animation of last year's edition, including 30 signature dunks; Total Control Shooting, which allows you to control the loft of your shots; nine new offensive plays and four new defensive plays, including the Bulls' triangle offense, Seattle's half-court trap and Utah's pick and roll; an exciting 2-on-2 Play Mode and a whole bunch of other improvements.

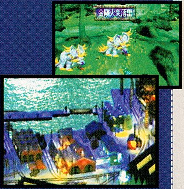
ShootOut's players also look and perform the most accurately thanks to SCEA's motion-blending and "skinning" techniques in addition to realistic player sizes and performance ratings.



YOU CAN NOW CONTROL THE ARC OF EACH SHOT.

STATS

THEME	# OF PLAYERS	% COMPLETE	AVAILABILITY	PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER
Sports	1-8	100%	March	SCEA	SISA



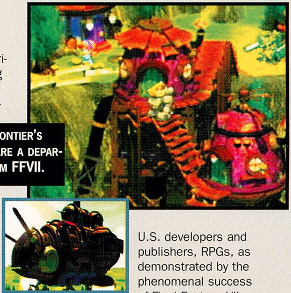
SaGa Frontier

Squaresoft's latest is seven games in one

According to the Squaresoft, SaGa Frontier will contain over 140 hours of gameplay. Now, before you groan and complain how notoriously inaccurate estimates of playing time generally are, consider this: SaGa Frontier contains *seven* fully realized adventures, each featuring a different hero. Gamers can choose to play as a dark wizard, an outcast half-breed, an unearthed robot and four others. Your objectives differ dramatically depending on which character you choose. Will you seek revenge, accumulate wealth and power or save the world? The choice is yours.

In addition to the unmistakable artistry of Squaresoft, SaGa Frontier will contain 30-plus polygonal regions to explore and a huge cast of sub-characters; at any given time, you may have as many as 15 different characters in your party.

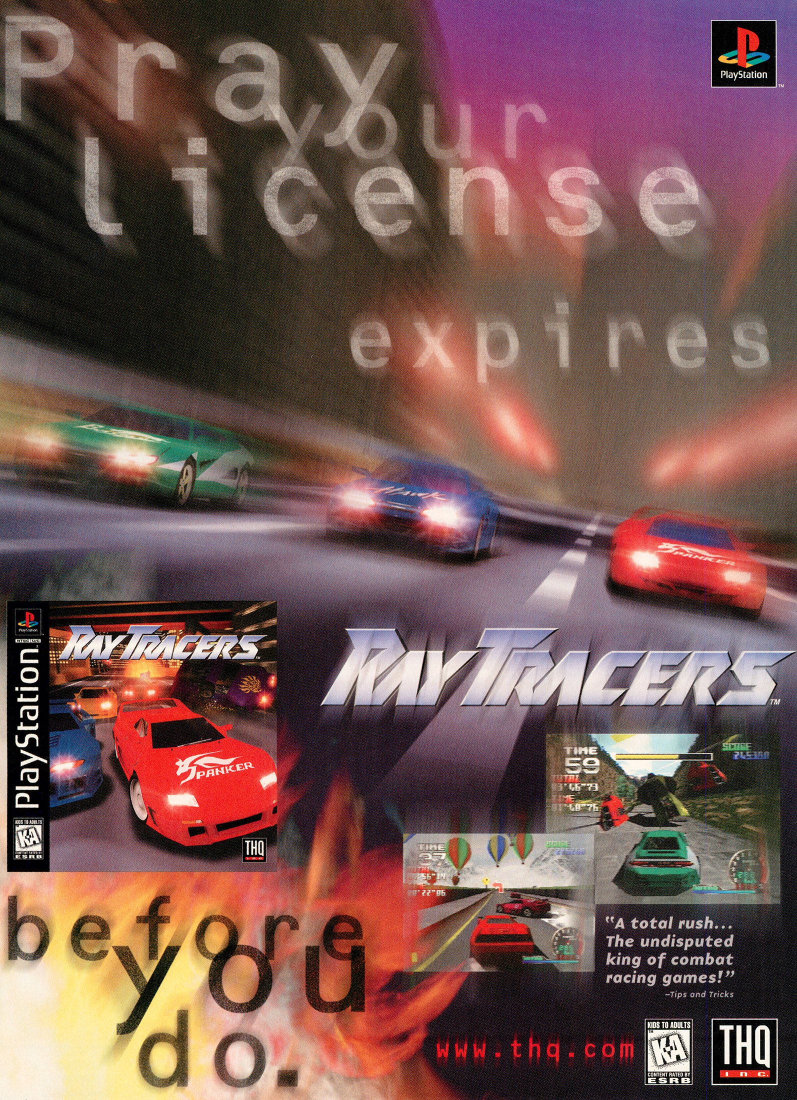
Once considered a niche market by many U.S. developers and publishers, RPGs, as demonstrated by the phenomenal success of Final Fantasy VII, are here to stay. It looks like the floodgates have finally opened, and we should continue to see more and more great Japanese RPGs like SaGa Frontier hitting U.S. shores.



SAGA FRONTIER'S VISUALS ARE A DEPARTURE FROM FFVII.

STATS

THEME	# OF PLAYERS	% COMPLETE	AVAILABILITY	PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER
RPG	1	100%	March	SCEA	Squaresoft


PlayStation
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THQ
KIDS TO ADULTS
K-A
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
TIME
59
SCORE
TIME
37
SCORE
NITRO
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K-A
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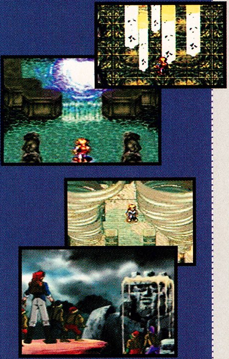
"A total rush... The undisputed king of combat racing games!"
–Tips and Tricks



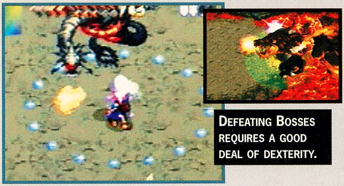
Alundra

Zelda-style adventure hits PlayStation

While many new PlayStation owners are intrigued by the rich stories, huge worlds and extend playing times offered by RPGs, they just can't seem to get into repetitive, turn-based combat typical of the genre. If you are such a gamer, you should check out Alundra, which contains a more action-oriented, Zelda-like style of play.

If you were intrigued by the first part of our huge Alundra strategy guide, here's your chance to see the game in motion. As you can see from the demo, beautifully animated cut-scenes complement the action.

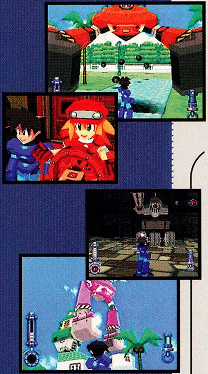
If you want to read more about the game, check out part two of our Alundra strategy guide, located in the back of this issue.



DEFEATING BOSSES REQUIRES A GOOD DEAL OF DEXTERITY.

STATS

THEME	# OF PLAYERS	% COMPLETE	AVAILABILITY	PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER
RPG	1	100%	March	Work.Des.	SCEI



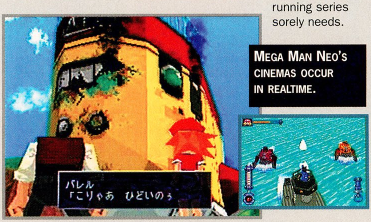
Mega Man Neo

The Blue Bomber gets a 3-D facelift

At close to five minutes long, this viewable demo of Mega Man Neo easily is the longest featured to date on any of our discs. That's a good thing, because there is plenty in this game to see.

When Capcom announced it would be transporting its longest-running series into a third dimension, many were skeptical. Fear not, however; it looks like Mega Man Neo (a.k.a. Mega Man Dash in Japan) will retain all the platforming action long-time fans of the series have come to expect, while infusing the game with some unexpected RPG elements. Instead of a series of side-scrolling 2-D levels, Neo offers an entire 3-D world to freely explore. Shops and other buildings can be entered and townspeople can be questioned. Cinemas are done in realtime and contain tons of spoken dialogue, too. But don't worry; Neo looks like it will contain one long-time Mega Man convention: winning a defeated Boss' weapon.

It looks as though Mega Man Neo will be the breath of fresh air Capcom's long-running series sorely needs.

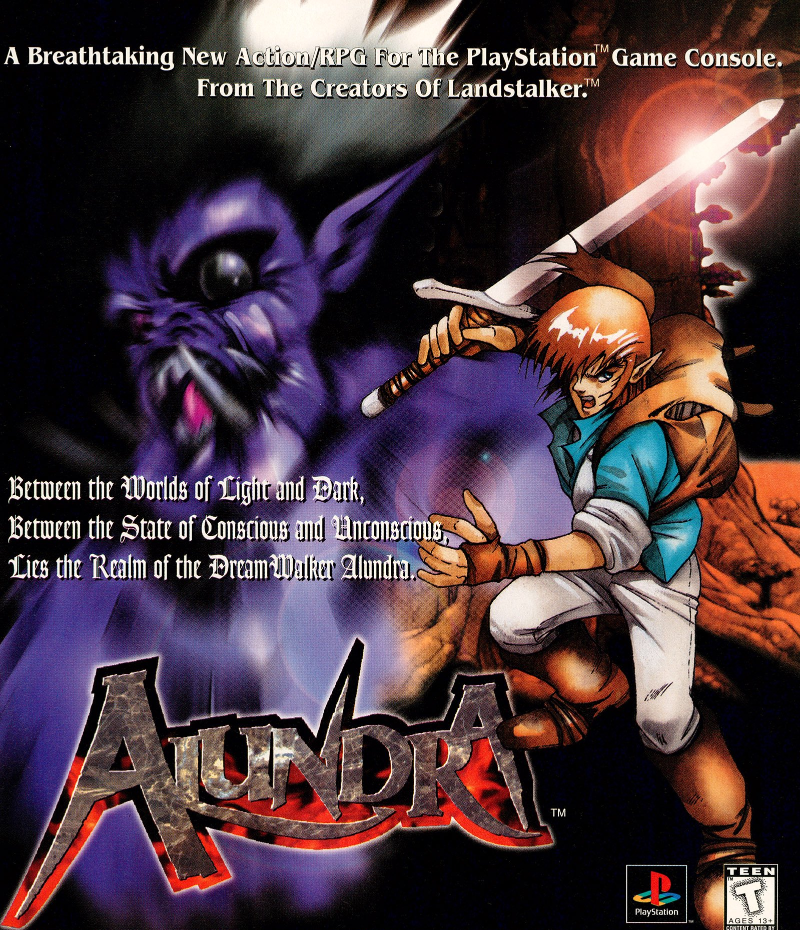


MEGA MAN NEO'S CINEMAS OCCUR IN REALTIME.

STATS

THEME	# OF PLAYERS	% COMPLETE	AVAILABILITY	PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER
Action	1	95%	May	Capcom	Capcom

A Breathtaking New Action/RPG For The PlayStation™ Game Console. From The Creators Of Landstalker.™


Between the Worlds of Light and Dark,
Between the State of Conscious and Unconscious,
Lies the Realm of the DreamWalker Alundra.
ALUNDRA™
PlayStation
TEEN
T
AGES 13+
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

WORKING DESIGNS®

Our games go to 11!™

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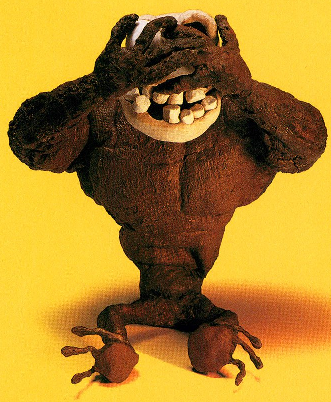
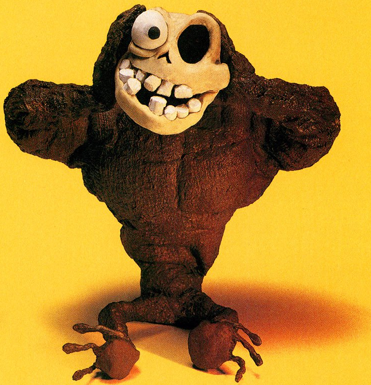


See No Evil...



Hear No Evil...

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Unleash deadly emissions—from the Fart-Head to the almighty Universe Enema.

Give your thumbs a rest with **bee-yoo-tee-ful cinematics!**

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PlayStation
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TEEN
DreamWorks Interactive
Electronic Arts

"Chock Full O' Humor, Just Like Earthworm Jim.™"
—Game Informer

TEEN AGES 13+ CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
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DREAMWORKS INTERACTIVE
ELECTRONIC ARTS™

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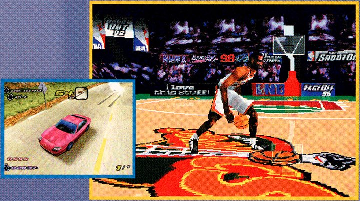
COMING SOON

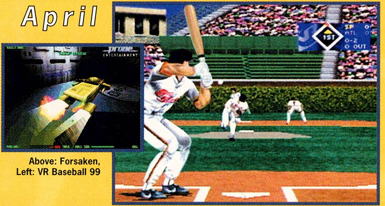
This Month

Atari Collection II	Midway	Compilation
Bloody Roar	SCEA	Fighting
Breath of Fire III	Capcom	RPG
Clay Fighter Extreme	Interplay	Fighting
Dead or Alive	Tecmo	Fighting
Deathtrap Dungeon	Eidos	Action/Adventure
Diablo	EA	Action/RPG
Elric	Psygnosis	Adventure
NBA ShootOut 98	SCEA	Sports
Need For Speed III	EA	Racing
Newman/Haas Racing	Psygnosis	Sports
Ninja	Eidos	Action/Fighting
Rascal	Psygnosis	Action
Reboot	Electronic Arts	Action
Running Wild	Universal Studios	Racing
SaGa Frontier	SCEA	RPG
Sentinel 2	Psygnosis	Strategy
TNN MotorSports Hardcore 2	ASC Games	Racing
Wreckin' Crew	Sir Tech	Racing



Above: NBA ShootOut 98, Left: Need For Speed III

April

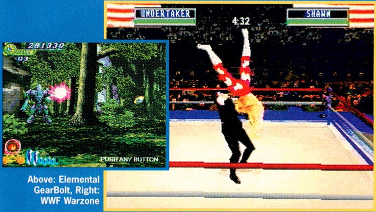


Above: Forsaken, Left: VR Baseball 99

Bass Masters Classic: PE	T*HQ	Sports
Crime Killer	Interplay	Driving/Combat
Forsaken	Acclaim	Action
Gallop Racer	Tecmo	Simulation
Grand Theft Auto	ASC Games	Driving/Action
Hardball 6	Accolade	Sports
Jack Nicholas Golf	Accolade	Sports
Mega Man Neo	Capcom	Action
Populous 3	EA/Bullfrog	Strategy
Super Motocross	Acclaim	Racing
VR Baseball 99	Interplay	Sports
WarGames	MGM Interactive	Strategy
Warhammer 2: Dark Omen	EA/Maxis	Strategy
Wild 9	Interplay	Action

Future Releases

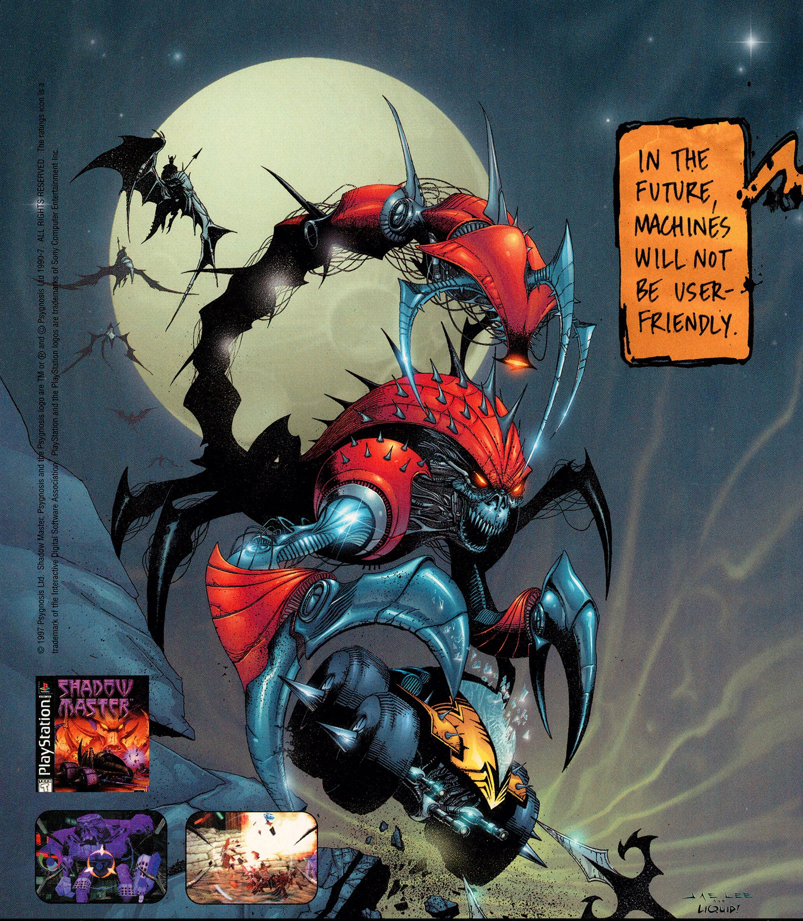
Agent Armstrong	GT Interactive	Action
Alien Resurrection	Fox Interactive	Action/Adventure
Batman & Robin	Acclaim	Action/Adventure
Blasto	SCEA	Action/Adventure
C (working title)	Konami	Shooter
Carom Shot	ASCII	Sports
Cardinal Syn	SCEA	Fighting
Deception II	Tecmo	Action
Einhander	SCEA	Shooter
Elemental GearBolt	Working Designs	Shooter
Exodus	SCEA	Action
Fifth Element	Kalisto	Action/Adventure
Fly by Wire	Shiny	Flight Simulation
Gran Turismo	SCEA	Driving
Heart of Darkness	Infogrames	Action
Judge Dredd	Gremlin	Light Gun
MLB 99	SCEA	Sports
Masters of Monsters	ASCII	RPG
MediEvil	SCEA	Action/Adventure
Men in Black	Gremlin	Action/Adventure
Messiah	Shiny	Action/Adventure
Metal Gear Solid	Konami	Action/Adventure
Mortal Kombat 4	Midway	Fighting
NFL Blitz	Midway	Sports
Powerboat Racing	Interplay	Racing
Psybadek	Psygnosis	Racing
Parasite Eve	Squaresoft	Action/Adventure
Rapid Racer	SCEA	Racing
Return Fire II	MGM Int.	Action/Strategy
Tekken 3	Namco	Fighting
Tecmo Super Bowl	Tecmo	Sports
Tomorrow Never Dies	MGM Int.	Action
Tonba	SCEA	Platform
Vigilante 8	Activision	Driving/Combat
WWF Warzone	Acclaim	Wrestling
Z-Axis Soccer	Z-Axis	Sports



Above: Elemental GearBolt, Right: WWF Warzone

Left: Vigilante 8, Above: Return Fire II

All release dates are tentative and subject to change. More information on all *Future Releases* will be given as it becomes available.



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PSYGNOSIS

PC CD ROM

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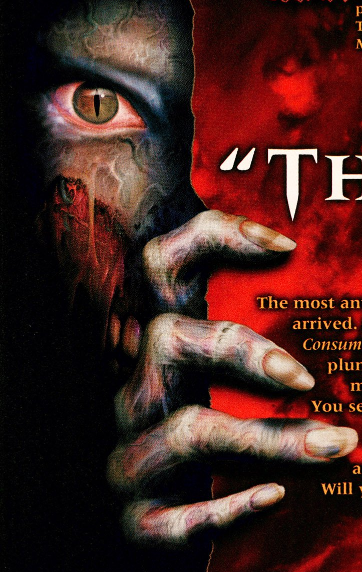
RESIDENT EVIL 2 HAS RISEN.

Your weapons? Powerful and plentiful. Master the Flame Thrower, Grenade Launcher, Machine Gun and more!

"EVEN MORE GORE."
– PSM MAGAZINE



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The most anticipated gaming event of 1998 has arrived. Resident Evil™ 2, the shocking sequel to the *Consumer's Choice: Best PlayStation Game Overall,* plunges horror fans into the most intense, the most terrifying game experience ever crafted. You see evil. You hear evil. You're overwhelmed by evil, as you fight through hordes of flesh-starved zombies, blood-thirsty beasts and other mutations of modern science. Will you survive the horror?

Twice the blood. Twice the gore.

RESIDENT EVIL™ 2

CAPCOM

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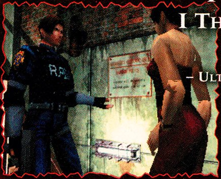


"SOMEBODY PINCH ME, I THINK I'M IN HEAVEN."

– ULTRA GAMEPLAYERS

Splatter entrails all over Racoon City. Inflict grotesque wound effects on the undead.

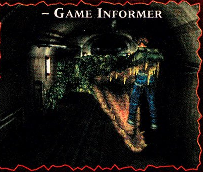
EVENT OF 1998.

EVEN COMES CLOSE."

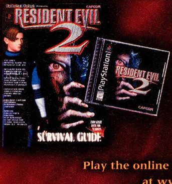
– GAMEFAN

"AN INTENSE AND HORRIFIC ADVENTURE THAT CHILLS THE SPINE."

– GAME INFORMER



A mysterious virus has mutated the local inhabitants into flesh-eating monsters, hell-bent on snacking on your still-warm spleen.



They're Here! Resident Evil 2 And The Official Strategy Guide!

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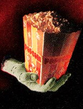

Play the online Resident Evil 2 game at www.residentevil2.com

MATURE M AGES 17+ CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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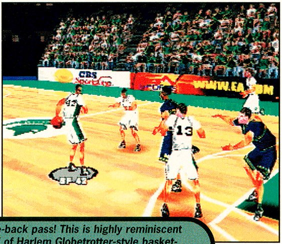
March Madness 98

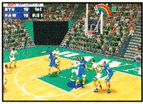
This game's a PTPer baby!



Check out that behind-the-back pass! This is highly reminiscent of the Dindo Perez school of Harlem Globetrotter-style basketball. We always ask him where he learned his moves, but Din won't say. He just smiles and starts doing a pose-down, putting everyone to shame with his hyper-blasted quads and calves.

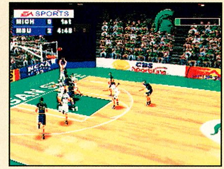
The last and only college hoops game that came out of EA Sports was Coach K's College Basketball on the Genesis 16-Bit system. Many gamers, myself included, feel that game was one of the finest basketball simulations ever released. The realism of the players' clothing and lanky body animations were just one of many of the fine points of the game. It was also incredibly tough and emphasized strong defensive skills in order to advance. Years later, EA has come back to the title (sans coach K) that earned them a place in the hearts of all die-hard hoops fans.

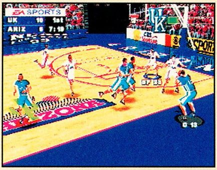
March Madness contains almost all the elements from the previous game that made the original so good, but with a few twists and improvements. First, the bad news. Since this isn't a final copy of the game, this is subject to change, but the shot percentage is too high. One of the classic touches of couch K was the fact that these aren't professional players so you'll see them miss a lot of shots and throw up the occasional air ball. In the current build, these guys are superstars. Aside from that grievance, there are no other glaring areas of weakness that I can see. The play is fast and the action is easy to follow. One of the enhancements that leap out at you is the music. There's a great selection of tunes played by a college band that captures the mood of the game perfectly. You'll be happy to know that one of the neat little ditties the band belts out is a rendition of the theme

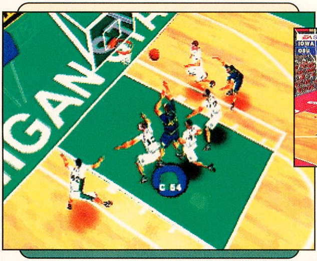


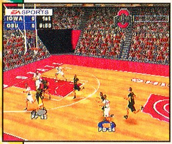
Just in case you didn't know, breaking the backboard is possible in March Madness. Below: This little dude's not gonna break anything.

NBA Live 98 teamed up with TNT to heighten the televised aspect of their game so March Madness went out and matched up with CBS Sports. The CBS Sports banner is just one of the many sights there are to be seen around the court. Although it's not in the game, check out the cool *OPM* logo in the contents page. There are authentic team logos and courts that look somewhat like their real-life counterparts.

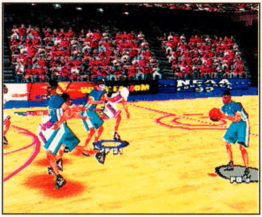




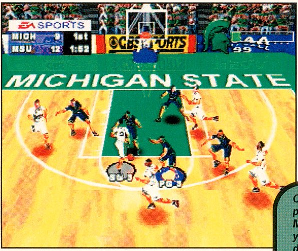




March Madness is going to be a hot multiplayer game. "Gimme the rock! Gimme the rock!" yells Dave "Mad Dog" Malec.



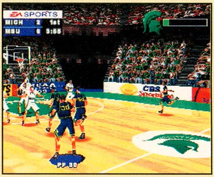
from *Hawaii Five-O*. There are the standard play modes that you'd expect like exhibition and season settings along with a couple others. The in-game options give you a good amount of control over the coaching factors. One of the neatest features which was first seen on Coach K was the self-running play outline. This allowed viewers to see what the play would look like when it was executed correctly. It is in March Madness and is still as useful as ever. This has been adopted into the Live series, but seems a little more useful in a game of this type. There's a lot to look forward to and we're anxious to see how the game will ultimately turn out. According to our schedules, we may get extremely lucky and get a reviewable copy in time for next month's issue. Keep your fingers crossed!

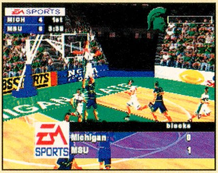


Camera views are something that players like good control of and March Madness definitely gives you some good choices. The default "live" view is preferred around the office.

We got next!

March Madness will be the first time the women will be able to get busy on the court in a console video game. Unfortunately, the version we previewed didn't yet have them in so we can't show them to you, but they'll be there. These are real women college teams and although you can't pit the men versus the women, there's lots of fun to be had. There's no word yet on whether there are any females with dunking prowess, but we're sure they'll be more than a few high flyers ready to slam a couple down.





We'll be back with more March Madness and show you the fighting females that are going to be included in the final version.

STATS:

THEME	# OF PLAYERS	% COMPLETE	AVAILABILITY	PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER
Basketball	1-8	90%	March	EA Sports	EA Sports

BE
ON
A
FIRST
NAME

BASIS
WITH
THE
OZONE
LAYER

COOLBOARDERS 2™

TRICK BOOST
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TRICK BOOST
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68mph

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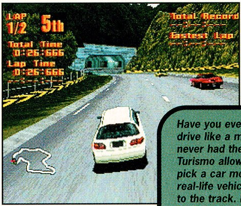
Gran Turismo

SCEA is gearing up to redefine a genre

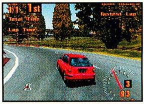

LAP 1/2 5th
Total Time 0:26:666
Lap Time 0:26:666
Total Record
Fastest Lap

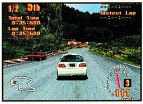
There is now a number of PlayStation racing games which feature vehicles based on real-life automobiles. The Test Drive series features a number of unique vehicles, from the Jeeps and Hummers of Test Drive: Off-Road to the high-performance screamers in TD4. The Need For Speed series also includes a slew of supercharged, pricey racers. These are fine when it comes to testing out vehicles that none of us will ever get a chance to drive in real life; but what about taking the cars we use every day for a spin? Enter Gran Turismo from Sony Computer Entertainment America. This amazingly realistic racer features vehicles taken from the garage of the average driver, (as well as a few special supercharged racing models) from familiar manufacturers like Honda, Subaru, Toyota and Mitsubishi. On store shelves now in Japan, Gran Turismo is expected to hit the U.S. sometime before summer, and if the Japanese version is any guide, the game is likely to revolutionize the genre as we know it.

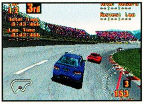
Have you ever wanted to drive like a maniac, but just never had the nerve? Gran Turismo allows players to pick a car modeled after a real-life vehicle and take it to the track. How does it compare to the real thing? We're in the process of testing that right now; watch for a Gran Turismo feature in a future issue of OPM.

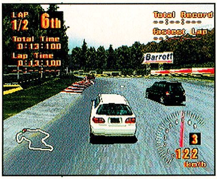
The game features two different modes of play. Arcade Mode should be familiar to any fan of PlayStation racers: players select a vehicle, choose their preferred transmission (i.e., automatic or manual), and pick one of four tracks on which to face off against five computer-controlled vehicles. The competition here is primarily for bragging rights; the game keeps track of the best times and ranks each player accordingly.

But it's in the innovative Gran Turismo Mode where the game really shows its stuff. Players can shop around town for the perfect vehicle from the selection of dealers. Once purchased, the car can be adjusted in the player's garage and enhanced with parts sold by the dealer. Then, players can choose to compete in several different "seasons," each with a unique structure.

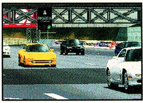

1/1 1st
Fastest Lap
3
93


1/2 5th
Total Time 0:35:600
Lap Time 0:35:600
Fastest Lap
3
111


1/2 3rd
Total Time 0:43:466
Lap Time 0:43:466
Fastest Lap
3
153

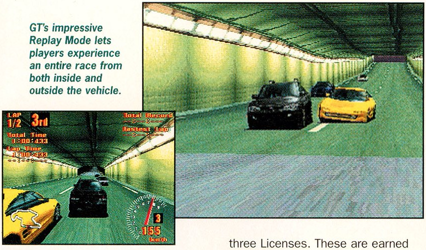

LAP 1/2 6th
Total Time 0:13:100
Lap Time 0:13:100
Total Record
Fastest Lap
Barrett
3
122
km/h

Note: All the car models featured in this preview may not make it into the final U.S. version due to international licensing issues.



LAP 2/2 5th
Total Time 2:40:866
Lap Time 1:35:775
1:05:091
Total Record
Fastest Lap 1:35:775
3
115
km/h

In the Japanese version of Gran Turismo, the Dual Shock controller responds to impacts with an impressive rumble, unlike the short-lived force-feedback buzz on the original Japanese dual-analog stick.



GT's impressive Replay Mode lets players experience an entire race from both inside and outside the vehicle.

At this point, players can also head to the test track. This track offers a chance to make minute adjustments to the vehicle, from tweaking the gear ratio to experimenting with different sets of tires, and then take the car for a spin on the short track to observe the results. There are literally hundreds of different combinations available, so extensive testing is encouraged in order to get a feel for the different elements.

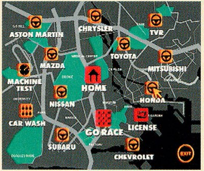
Gran Turismo Mode also gives players the option of trying for one of three Licenses. These are earned after passing a series of 10 tests of driving skill. Most of these require simply reaching the finish line in a certain amount of time, but some include tests of cornering and braking as well.

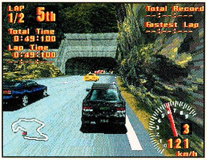
The Japanese version is one of the first games to support Sony's new Dual Shock force-feedback dual-analog controller; and while as of this writing no official plans have been announced to bring this peripheral to the U.S., it is generally expected that it will be released here—perhaps even with GT as its inaugural title.

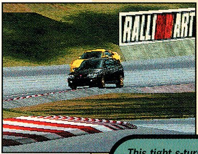
With its exhaustive collection of vehicle options, not to mention the impressive array of real-life vehicle licenses, Gran Turismo is expected to set a new standard for racing simulations. Check in next month for more info.

Say goodbye to pushy car salesmen forever

In Gran Turismo Mode, players can jump from dealer to dealer to check out the different options on each automobile model. After winning a race, the driver is awarded with a substantial sum of money, which can then be applied toward a new vehicle or used to modify a present car. It's like a mix of the best elements of Rage Racer and NASCAR 98.

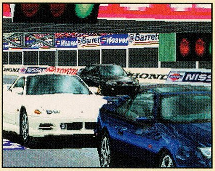




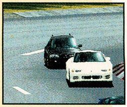


This tight s-turn really shows off the realistic suspension of GT's vehicles. This is even more noticeable when the Drift Driving setting is turned off, since the cars in this mode grip the road better.

And they're off!



From the first moments of the race all the way to the finish line, the Replay Mode offers a unique view of the action.



As if the amazing realism of the actual race were not enough, Gran Turismo includes one of the most jaw-dropping Replay Modes in any racer. Using a series of intense ESPN-style camera angles, the replays show off the game's graphic quality and attention to detail.

The intricate car models exhibit a feature called environmental mapping, which means that the dynamic lighting and the objects on the course are reflected off the shiny surfaces on the vehicles.

But what's most impressive is the realistic suspension of the vehicles. Seeing your car rocking and sliding around an especially tight turn makes sitting through a replay of an entire race completely worthwhile!

STATS:

THEME	# OF PLAYERS	% COMPLETE	AVAILABILITY	PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER
Racing	1 or 2	80%	2nd Qtr. '98	SCEA	SCEI

Diablo

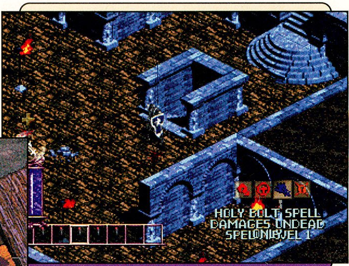
One hell of an adventure from EA

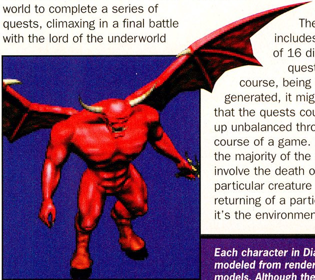
Continuing in the tradition of translating hit PC titles to the PlayStation, Electronic Arts is preparing to release the console version of Diablo. As one of the most popular titles of 1997, Diablo ensnared PC users with its dark, menacing graphics, straightforward, action-oriented play and extensive multiplayer capabilities. Now, PlayStation owners will get a chance to see what all the excitement was about.

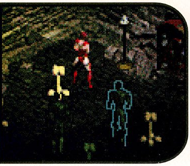
In Diablo, players create and evolve a character in classic RPG style. Choosing from one of three classes (Warrior, Rogue and Sorcerer), players begin the game with their character in a small, idyllic village. After speaking to a few of the locals, however, it is revealed that all is not right with the world. The player must then venture into the underworld to complete a series of quests, climaxing in a final battle with the lord of the underworld himself, Diablo. What makes the game particularly unique is that these quests are randomly assigned when a game is started. As their first quest, for example, players might learn of the mysterious disappearance of a valuable magical artifact. If they venture into the dungeons and retrieve the item, they will be assigned a new, more difficult quest, and so on. The game includes a total of 16 different quests in all. Of course, being randomly generated, it might seem that the quests could end up unbalanced through the course of a game. However, the majority of the quests involve the death of a particular creature or the returning of a particular item; it's the environment—that is, the general population and difficulty of the monsters—that actually determines the level of challenge for a particular quest, and these invariably become more difficult the deeper the player progresses through each game's 16 dungeon levels.

With so many different assignments, it's easy to lose sight of one's goals, so the game includes a Quest Log that can be accessed at any time from the Pause Menu. (The quests, by the way, are delivered by townspeople via spoken text; using the Quest Log replays these passages.)

Other town points of interest include a Blacksmith who buys,



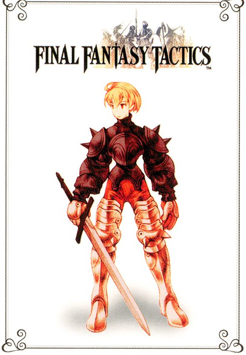




Each character in Diablo is modeled from rendered models. Although the environment is not, strictly speaking, 3-D, the isometric (three-quarter perspective) view offers plenty of opportunities for hidden items and monsters. The developers at Blizzard could have simply left the discovery of these items to luck (or misfortune), but they decided to be nice and make the walls turn transparent when the character is hidden from view. Of course, they don't turn completely clear, so you'll still need to keep a careful eye on the character's immediate surroundings.

Players need to pay close attention to the gossip passed around town; it offers valuable clues in addition to providing the framework for the player's next quest.

THE TOWN ELDER
WOULD YOU LIKE TO
IDENTIFY AN ITEM
SAY GOODBYE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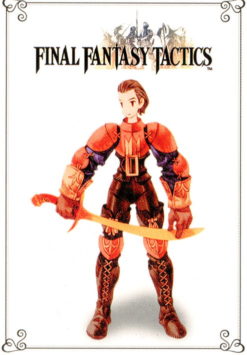
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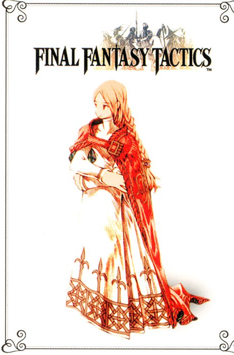
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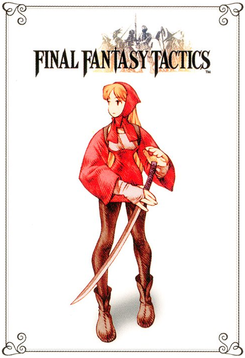
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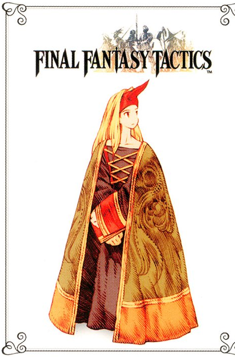
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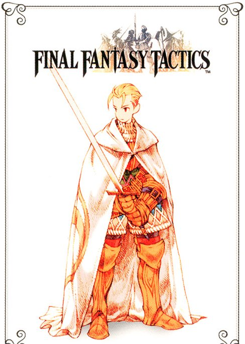
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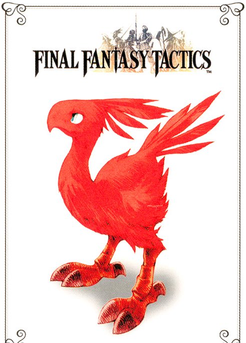
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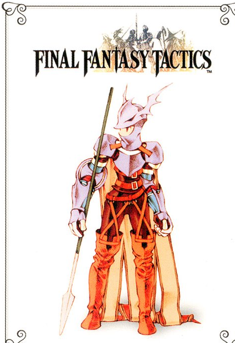
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Princess Ovelia Atkascha

She is the adopted daughter of the late King Omdoria III and his wife Queen Ruvelia. Sheltered throughout her childhood in the safety of Orbonne Monastery, Princess Ovelia Atkascha finds herself in the middle of controversy surrounding her succession to the throne.

For more information on Princess Ovelia Atkascha, get **Prima Publishing's** official Final Fantasy Tactics strategy guide.

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Delita Hyral

Delita Hyral is the childhood friend of Ramza and the Beoulve family. After the death of his sister Teta, he becomes deeply involved in the War of the Lions—although which side he's fighting on is anyone's guess!

For more information on Delita Hyral, get **Prima Publishing's** official Final Fantasy Tactics strategy guide.

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Ramza Beoulve

The youngest son of the Beoulve family and hero of our story, Ramza Beoulve becomes involved in the search for the Zodiac Stones after witnessing the kidnapping of Princess Ovelia.

For more information on Ramza Beoulve, get **Prima Publishing's** official Final Fantasy Tactics strategy guide.

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Summoner

Requirements: Time Mage Level Two
Weapons: Rod, Staff
Helmet: Hat
Armor: Clothes, Robe

Pro: With its MA strength and MP bonuses, the Summoner is one of the game's strongest magicians.

Con: Having one of the largest HP and AT strength handicaps (next to the Bard) leaves this character vulnerable on the battlefield and in need of protection.

For more information on the Summoner, get **Prima Publishing's** official Final Fantasy Tactics strategy guide.

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Ninja

Requirements: Archer Level Three; Thief Level Four; Geomancer Level Two
Weapons: Knife, Ninja Sword, Hammer
Helmet: Hat
Armor: Clothes

Pro: High speed and movement ratings along with double weapon attacks make this character a powerhouse on the battlefield!

Con: Low HP totals put the character at risk on the front line.

For more information on the Ninja, get **Prima Publishing's** official Final Fantasy Tactics strategy guide.

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Lancer

Requirements: Thief Level Three
Weapons: Spear, Shield
Helmet: Helmet
Armor: Armor, Robe

Pro: This class's use of Heavy Armor and midranged Spear make it a nice alternative to the Knight class.

Con: When planning a jump attack you have no access to the amount of time it will take to activate.

For more information on the Lancer, get **Prima Publishing's** official Final Fantasy Tactics strategy guide.

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Red Chocobo

Class A Red Chocobo

Move	Jump	C-EV
6	5	10%

Attacks	R/S/M	When Poached
Choco Attack	Counter	Remedy
Choco Ball	Walk in Water	Barette
Choco Meteor	Ignore Heights	

For more information on the Red Chocobo, get **Prima Publishing's** official Final Fantasy Tactics strategy guide.

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Knight

Requirements: Squire Level Two
Weapons: Sword, Knight Sword, Shield
Helmet: Helmet
Armor: Armor, Robe

Pro: The Knight's Battle Skills ability works with both long- and short-range weapons and is great for disabling powerful enemies.

Con: You can disarm Break attacks using the Maintenance support skill.

For more information on the Knight, get **Prima Publishing's** official Final Fantasy Tactics strategy guide.

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THE COLOR SCHEMES BELOW ARE USED IN THE PREVIEWS AND REVIEWS SECTIONS TO INDICATE THE GAME'S GENRE:

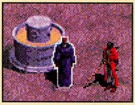
•Action/Adventure **•Fighting** **•Sports**
•RPG **•Puzzle/Strategy** **•Platform**

The challenges in translating PC titles are nothing if not diabolical...

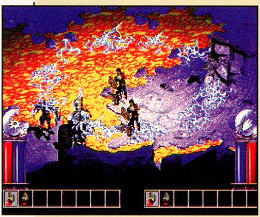
The PlayStation version of Diablo includes a number of features not seen on the PC. The most notable difference is the modified Multiplayer Mode, which places two players on the same screen in the style of the mother of all cooperative adventures, Gauntlet. This prevents players from wandering off on their own adventures, and forces them to work together. (Of course, EA plans to allow players to attack each other as well, because that's just good clean fun.)

In addition, the view is 25 percent larger to make up for the lower resolution of a television screen. Some new lighting effects are featured, as well, including a new day/night cycle in the town levels.

The translation to the D-pad could have been disastrous, but the control configuration appears to be well thought out. In any event, if players aren't happy with the default configuration, the controls can be completely customized. All in all, it appears to be quite a careful translation.

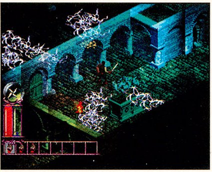


The larger full-screen view helps the game's clarity.



sells and repairs weapons; a Witch who does the same for magical items; and Cain the Elder, who will identify valuable items as well as offer choice bits of gossip.

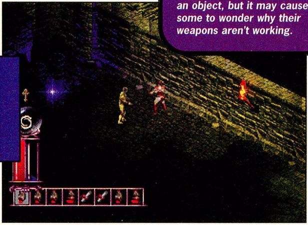
The dungeon, however, is where the majority of the game's action takes place. Here, players find themselves in a vast network of dark caverns. The scant lighting offers plenty of opportunities for ghouls, demons and other nasty beasts to leap from the shadows surrounding the hapless adventurer. The layout of these dungeons is also randomly generated at the start of a game, offering a new adventure with each new game.



The spectacular spell effects are highlighted by smooth, dynamic lighting, which burns through the darkness.

As players progress through the dungeons, they pick up armfuls of special items. The wise adventurer learns quickly to use discretion in deciding which item to keep, as the character's inventory is limited to only a few large items. In addition to new items, players gain experience with each kill. After achieving a new skill level, the player is awarded a number of points which can be doled out between the standard collection of RPG-style attributes: strength, dexterity, magic and so on. At any time, players can choose to save a character that has gained skill and experience, so that when a new game is started, an already-skilled character can be used in the new adventure.

Although the PlayStation version uses a significantly less comprehensive Multiplayer Option, it seems to include enough enhancements to make up for the difference. Look for this one on store shelves near the end of this month, and happy adventuring!



The controls may take a bit of getting used to for the first-time player. In order to perform any action, whether attacking monsters or opening chests, the player must first select the object being acted upon. This is done automatically when close to an object, but it may cause some to wonder why their weapons aren't working.

STATS:

THEME	# OF PLAYERS	% COMPLETE	AVAILABILITY	PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER
Adventure	1 or 2	90%	March	EA	Blizzard/Climax

Grand Theft Auto

So much fun it ought to be against the law

The PlayStation already is home to theme park and railroad simulators, but are you ready for the first organized crime sim?

Already one of the most controversial PC titles in recent memory, Grand Theft Auto soon will be doing time on PlayStation, courtesy of ASC Games.

In Grand Theft Auto you play as a new mafia recruit out to make a name for himself by stealing cars.

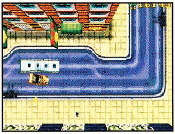
Barrel though 6,000 scale miles, three huge U.S. cities and over 200 missions as you make your bloody rise to the top, but be careful; wreak too much havoc and you'll become a marked man by the police, who can set up roadblocks and barricades to put an end to your career.

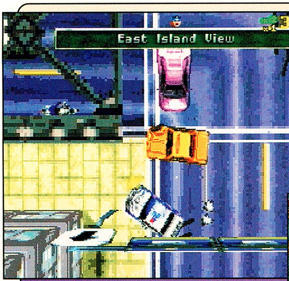
One of Grand Theft Auto's most unique features is the ability to commandeer 30 different vehicles, including trucks, buses, sports cars, jeeps, motorcycles, vans and more. Of course, the current occupants of said vehicles won't exactly hand you the keys, but you have ways of dealing with less-cooperative drivers.

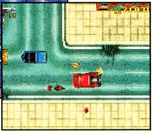
Upon stealing a new ride, the soundtrack will change to reflect the previous owner's musical taste. Steal a pick-up, and you'll be "treated" to a twangy country tune. Hop in a Viper look-alike and drive to the thumping rhythms of techno. There are seven musical styles in all, including techno, hip-hop, rock, '70s funk, dance, country, industrial and heavy metal. Many of the lyrics are peppered with colorful four-letter words, adding to Grand Theft Auto's controversy.

Viewed from a top-down perspective, Grand Theft Auto's graphics are a bit on the grainy side at this stage of the game's development, but this is offset by your ability to freely explore GTA's huge levels. At any point, you can take a shortcut through a crowed park or on a bustling sidewalk and watch the pedestrians fly.

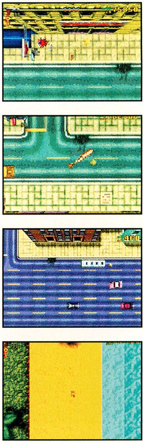
Each of Grand Theft Auto's 30 vehicles has its own handling characteristics and top speeds, so you'll have to

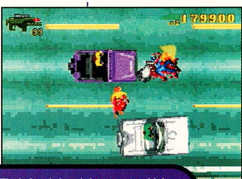




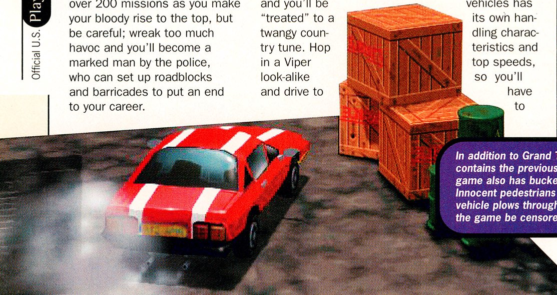


Swearing, carnage, brushes with the law...Grand Theft Auto has everything you'd experience during an average Chicago cab ride.





*In addition to Grand Theft Auto's harsh language, which contains the previously unthinkable "f***" word, the game also has buckets of blood and extreme violence. Innocent pedestrians become bumper bait, as your stolen vehicle plows through crowded streets and sidewalks. Will the game be censored before its release?*



(Continued on page 58)

too much for you?
PlayStation
WCW
NITRO
KIDS TO ADULTS
K-A
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
THQ
NASH
HALL
LEX LUGER
STING
HOLLYWOOD
RIC FLAIR
nWo

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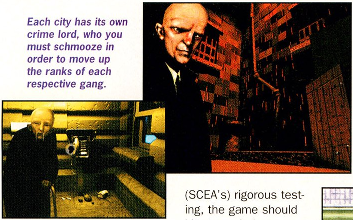
(Grand Theft Auto continued)

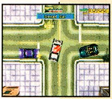


Each city has its own crime lord, who you must schmooze in order to move up the ranks of each respective gang.

become adept at driving a variety of cars to make it very far into the game. A bus may be good at ramming through a roadblock, but if you hit a traffic jam, you're as good as toast. A sleek crotch rocket, in contrast, can wind through the most dense traffic with ease.

Some missions will require you to deliver a car to a certain location, while the object of others is to steal the most valuable car. You even have to drive a truck that contains a ticking time bomb!

Assuming Grand Theft Auto makes it through Sony Computer Entertainment America's (SCEA's) rigorous testing, the game should hit store shelves some time in April. How will SCEA react to the game's violence, objectionable language and crime-*does*-pay theme? We honestly don't know, but GTA could prove to be a sort of censorship litmus test. If released in its current form, Grand Theft Auto will push the envelope more than any previous PlayStation title to date and could possibly open the door to more adults-only PC-to-PlayStation conversions. We'll definitely be watching this one closely in the future.



Bad Boys, Bad Boys, Whatcha gonna do?

If you want to make an omelet, you have to break a few legs, er, eggs. Unfortunately for you, the cops in Grand Theft Auto don't agree with your philosophy. Go too crazy and they'll descend on you like ants at a picnic. You can attempt to outrun them, but this becomes nearly impossible if there are more than a couple chasing you. You may also leave your vehicle at any point and battle them with an assortment of deadly weapons, including machine guns, rocket launchers and flamethrowers! Kill a cop, and his car becomes easy pickens. But look out; his fellow officers will pursue you with even more intensity.

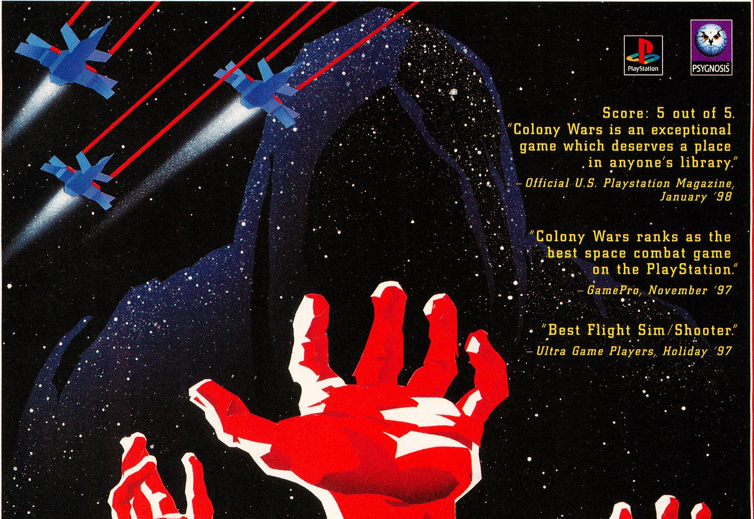
Hoofin' it

At any point in Grand Theft Auto, you are free to get out of your vehicle to explore the city on foot, including the tops of buildings. But be careful; stray too close to the edge and you may take an unwanted air dive onto the pavement below.

Having put on a few pounds due to the sedentary lifestyle of a magazine editor and torn out all his hair, a broken Dave Malec (left) finally retires in disgust.

STATS:

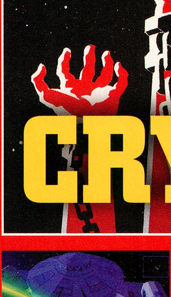
THEME	# OF PLAYERS	% COMPLETE	AVAILABILITY	PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER
Action	1	85%	April	ASC	DMA Design



Score: 5 out of 5.
"Colony Wars is an exceptional game which deserves a place in anyone's library."
– Official U.S. Playstation Magazine, January '98

"Colony Wars ranks as the best space combat game on the PlayStation."
– GamePro, November '97

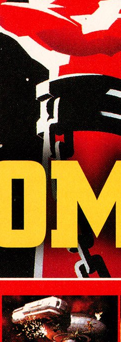
"Best Flight Sim/Shooter."
– Ultra Game Players, Holiday '97



COLONY WARS

Blast the chains of slavery straight to Hell. Join the rebellion and fly the hottest ships in the stars. You'll master six unique craft in your quest, each with different flight characteristics and weaponry. You'll fly more than 70 unique missions, success or failure determining a destiny that lies along one of five different paths. The cost of freedom is high. Are you willing to pay it?

EPIC SPACE CONFLICT



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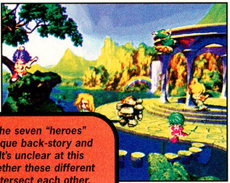
Visit www.colonywars.com for a chance to win a trip to Space Camp.

SaGa Frontier

A more light-hearted RPG from the makers of FFVII

Do the words "Final Fantasy" mean anything to you? Squaresoft, the company responsible for what is fast becoming one of the PlayStation's most groundbreaking titles (that's Final Fantasy VII, in case you've been living under a rock), is at it again with another RPG of epic proportions.



Each of the seven "heroes" has a unique back-story and mission. It's unclear at this point whether these different stories intersect each other, but it's a pretty sure bet.

Make no mistake, however; SaGa Frontier is no FFVII clone. The similarities the two games share are primarily cosmetic, and even these are distinct enough so that the games would be instantly distinguishable if placed side by side.

But the scope of FFVII is one attribute that SaGa Frontier does indeed share; the game includes seven complete quests, one for each of the game's unusual main characters. SCEA, in the marketing material circulated as part of their role as publishers, states that the game contains over 140 hours of gameplay. 140 hours! That's over three times the estimates made for Final Fantasy VII.

With over 30 separate "regions" to explore, one might think that a significant amount of this time would be taken up by travel alone. But getting familiar with the environment will be a must, since SaGa Frontier takes place in an entirely new universe with its own rules. For example, instead of the character classes found in standard RPGs (i.e., wizard, warrior, thief, etc.), abilities in SaGa Frontier are based on a character's species. Humans, for example, can use weapons, spells and "tricks" in battle, while Monsters can use few weapons and no spells, and battle primarily by absorbing the ability of the enemy and using it against them. The battle system itself is unique, as well; the options available to most characters far exceed the standard "attack, defend, use item" formula that most RPGs employ.

With a world as visually complex as that of Final Fantasy VII, a surprisingly non-linear plot, and the trademark Square style, SaGa Frontier will doubtless earn its own loyal following.

This is the reason ship, Cygnus.

Punch
Kick
Red

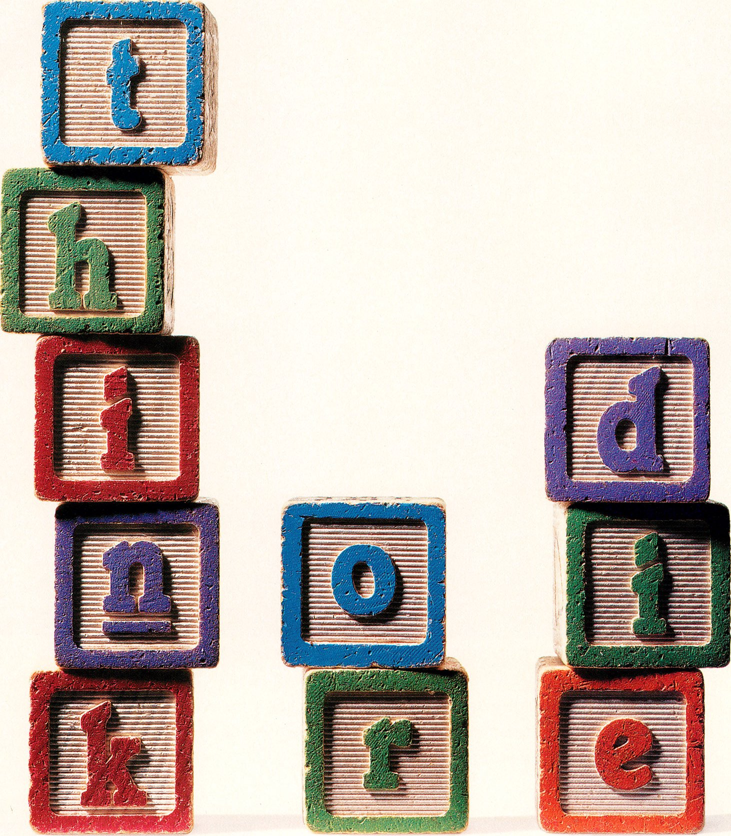
This is the 4th dimension
MagSphere

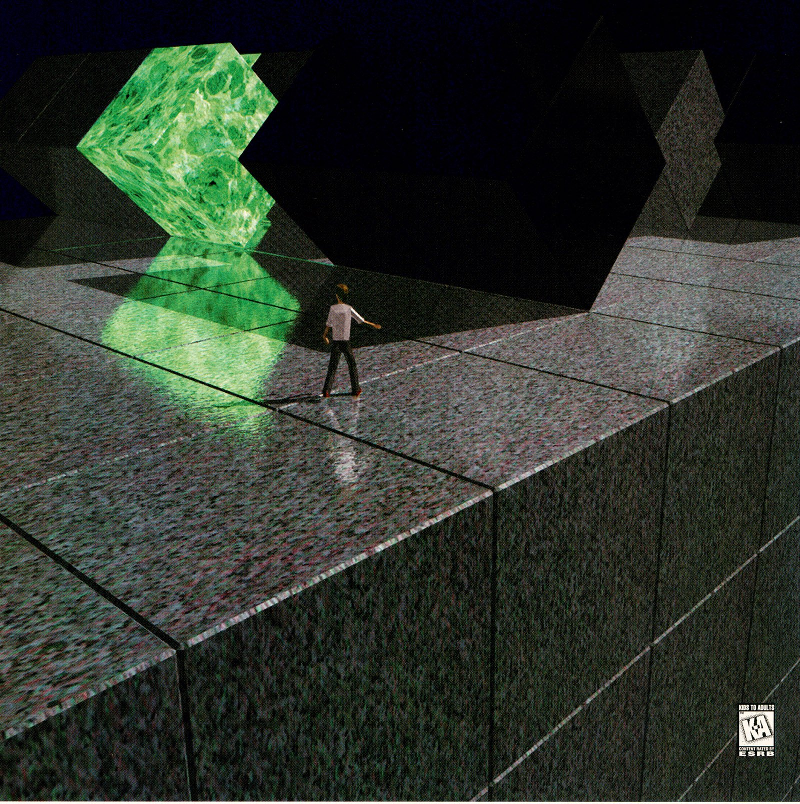
Bio Reasearch Lab

Each "region" in the world of SaGa Frontier has its own personality, much like the game's seven main characters.

STATS:

THEME	# OF PLAYERS	% COMPLETE	AVAILABILITY	PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER
RPG	1	90%	March	SCEA	Squaresoft


think
or
die



IT'S A SIMPLE PROPOSITION, REALLY. JUST USE THOSE STRATEGIC POWERS IN THAT NOGGIN OF YOURS TO OUTSMART AND DESTROY THE HUMORLESS GEOMETRIC BLOCKS AS THEY COME CRASHING TOWARD YOU. OR BE SQUASHED LIKE A POTATO CHIP. YOU MIGHT ALSO FIND YOURSELF CAREENING OFF THE END OF THE UNIVERSE. IS IT ANY WONDER YOU'LL KEEP COMING BACK FOR MORE?

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Intelligent Qube™

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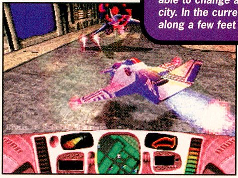
Crime Killer

Nothing outruns the law

If our 1998 Editors' Awards includes the category "Best Oxymoron in a Game Title," Interplay's Crime Killer is almost certain to win first prize. (If you're a killer, aren't you a criminal by definition? If so, must you kill yourself?) All seriousness aside, a rough version of Crime Killer appeared in playable form on our February demo disc and received plenty of accolades from readers.

After the floods of 2115, the haggard survivors are forced to huddle together on higher ground. For a while, humanity hangs on the brink of destruction. Since there are virtually no resources to fight over, the survivors put aside their differences of the past and erect new crime-free cities. Although man may develop new technologies, his basic nature remains the same; within a few years, organized crime once again re-emerges, equipped with state-of-the-art weaponry and vehicles. As a member of the Protectorate, you must help stamp out crime before the utopia you helped create once again lies in ruin.



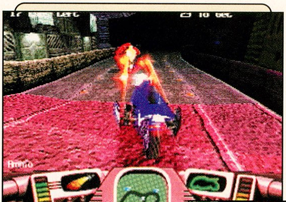
When the game is complete, the Wing should be able to change altitude as it races through the city. In the current build, however, it just skims along a few feet above the ground.

Players will careen through Crime Killer's 10 mission-based levels at breakneck speeds while piloting three futuristic vehicles—Car, Bike and Wing. When fully optimized, Crime Killer will run at 60 fps and include an intelligent camera that dips upon braking, rises upon acceleration and shakes as the result of a collision. Shatter your windshield, and the pieces will slide back and forth upon the dashboard as your vehicle winds through the city.

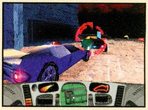
Players will be able to freely explore Crime Killer's roam-anywhere 3-D environments, which are plagued with a variety of criminal scum in addition an assortment of natural disasters, such as earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

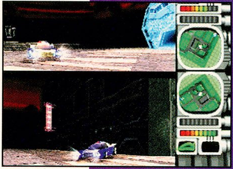
Crime Killer has a distinctive "Euro" look and is filled with such graphic effects as spot lights, lens flare, semi-transparent smoke and light sourcing, giving the game a gritty, yet futuristic look.

With looks to kill and plenty of bleak, off-the-rails urban environments to explore, Crime Killer is sure to be on many PlayStation owners' most wanted lists.



Because of its insane top speed, the Bike doesn't corner as well as the Car. Therefore, the streets in Bike stages have fewer sharp turns.





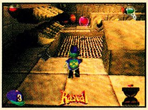
Gamers can play against computer-controlled enemies or battle a friend in Crime Killer's exciting Two-player Split-screen Mode.

STATS:

THEME	# OF PLAYERS	% COMPLETE	AVAILABILITY	PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER
Action	1-2	95%	April	Interplay	Pixelogic

Rascal

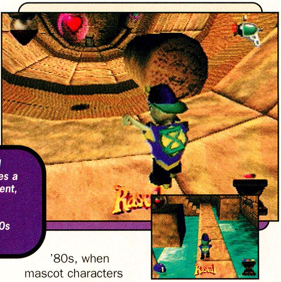
Journey through time with Psygnosis



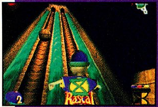
Just when you thought you'd seen the last "mascot character with attitude," along comes Rascal, a misbehaving 12-year-old out to rescue his scientist father from an evil time lord (are there any other kind?).

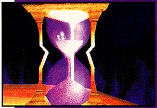
Developed for Psygnosis by platform gurus Travellers Tales (Mickey Mania, Toy Story, Sonic R, etc.), Rascal may prove to be the most technically impressive 3-D platform game ever created for PlayStation. The game will run at an astounding 60 frames per second while boasting such effects as realtime environment mapping, which allows polished surfaces such as glass or metal to reflect their surroundings. The developers also claim Rascal's incredibly fast load times will give the game a "classic cartridge feel." You can decide for yourself what that means; the jury is still out, in our opinion, until we receive a reviewable copy of the game.

Rascal's most interesting feature is the ability to visit six different zones—Castle, Aztec, Western, Galleon, Atlantis and the Lab—in three different time periods. (Maybe he should warp back to the late '80s, when mascot characters were en vogue.) Upon visiting the galleon in the past, Rascal finds himself in the middle of a sea battle. During the present, Rascal must swim through the same ship, now located at the bottom of the sea. (I guess that answers who won the battle.) Visit a third time, and Rascal once again must journey on foot through the ship, half buried in a sea of sand in a post-apocalyptic future. Although we traditionally loathe characters who try a little too hard to be hip, we promise to give Rascal a fair shake when we review it in the next issue of *Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine*.

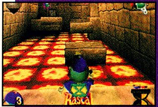


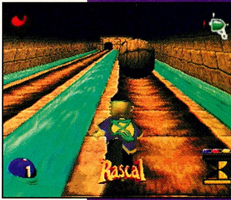
The frontier town Rascal visits in the past becomes a movie studio in the present, complete with hazard-filled set pieces from a Godzilla flick and a 1920s gangster movie.

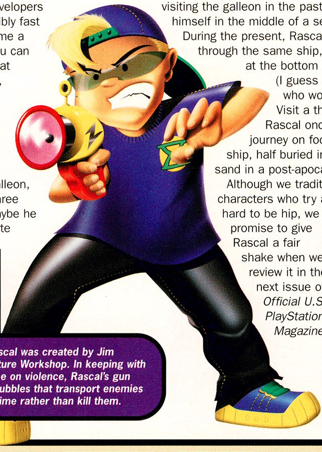


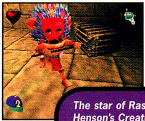


Like sands through the hour glass, so are the days of Rascal's life.









The star of Rascal was created by Jim Henson's Creature Workshop. In keeping with Henson's stance on violence, Rascal's gun creates time bubbles that transport enemies to a different time rather than kill them.

STATS:

THEME	# OF PLAYERS	% COMPLETE	AVAILABILITY	PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER
Action	1	100%	March	Psygnosis	Trav. Tales

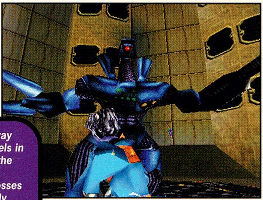
ReBoot

Enter the world of Saturday morning science fiction

Electronic Arts is putting the finishing touches on ReBoot, a 3-D action/adventure set in the universe of the hit Canadian television series (shown on Saturday mornings in most parts of the States) of the same name.

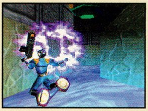
In ReBoot (the game) players enter the surreal world of Mainframe, a futuristic universe that exists inside a computer. Taking the role of Bob, a guardian of Mainframe, players zip around the world on Bob's zipboard (sort of like a two-piece floating skateboard) in an attempt to foil the evil Megabyte and his maniacal schemes.

It seems that Megabyte has harnessed the power of strange phenomena called Tears. (Not "tears" like it's-my-party-and-I'll-cry-if-I-want-to, but "tears" like they'll tear you to pieces.) These little balls of energy, if left unattended, will destroy everything around them. That's bad.



Bob will have to zip his way through 18 large 3-D levels in order to finally confront the evil Megabyte, facing 30 different enemies and Bosses along the way. Fortunately, he'll have an array of weapons and items at his disposal, in addition to a device to mend the Tears.

ReBoot's 3-D world resembles nothing so much as a giant skate-park for Bob's zipboard, and in some respects resembles a 3-D version of the arcade classic 720°. As such, the game should appeal to an even wider audience than the series. Watch for more on this unusual title.



The game is cut with computer-generated scenes from an entirely new ReBoot adventure, which was written as "episode zero" of the series, just for the game.

STATS:

THEME	# OF PLAYERS	% COMPLETE	AVAILABILITY	PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER
Action	1	90%	March	EA	EA Canada

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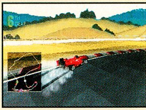


If any company were to be named the masters of racing, it would undoubtedly have to be Psygnosis. With a virtual stable of racers, ranging from their dead-on Formula 1 simulations to their futuristic WipeOut series, the company is well aware that racing games are responsible for raking in a sizeable percentage of the gamer's hard-earned dollar. Now, the company is gearing up to release yet another racing sim, this time bringing the action to the States.

Newman/Haas Racing is licensed by the racing organization of the same name. Founded in 1983 by former racer and team owner Carl Haas and actor and racing enthusiast Paul Newman (whose name has finally made the leap from salad dressing labels to video game boxes), the organization includes on its roster such "legacy" drivers as Christian Fittipaldi and Michael Andretti, just two of the leading names in the world of CART (Championship Auto Racing Teams, Inc.) racing. Of course, both of these big-name drivers will be included in the game, as well as a number of drivers who are not part of the Newman/Haas organization. These include 1996 CART champion Jimmy Vasser, 1997 Indy 500 winner Arie Luyendyk and CART newcomer Robby Gordon. The game also features a number of real tracks, like the Milwaukee Mile, the Laguna Seca raceway and the Midohio track. Also included is the "Firebird" test track.

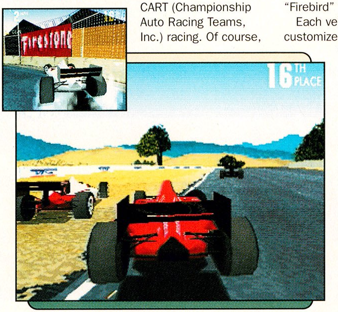
The tracks are accurate down to the advertisements on the walls.

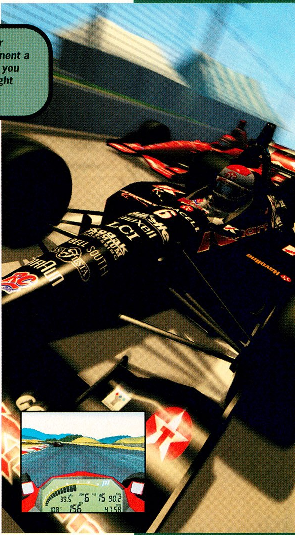
Damage to the vehicles can severely impair performance. For example, nudge an opponent a little too hard with your right front tire, and you may find your vehicle pulling hard to the right until you make it to the pit for repairs.

Each vehicle can be fully customized, just like the work done by pit crews in real life. And you'll need every little edge to end up in first place.

Commentary by ABC/ESPN commentators Danny Sullivan and Bob Varsha rounds out the collection of realistic touches.

The assortment of simulation aspects combined with the intensity of a CART competition should ensure a place in any CART fan's library.





The handling on these vehicles is extremely sensitive, forcing players to use exceptional precision, especially in turning.

STATS:

THEME	# OF PLAYERS	% COMPLETE	AVAILABILITY	PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER
Racing	1 or 2	95%	March	Psygnosis	Studio 33

One Wicked Weasel!

PlayStation
NTSC U/C
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JALECO™
KIDS TO ADULTS
K-A
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
SLUS-00579
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Think again!
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Filled with that classic 2D action that everyone's been talking about!

Viva Las Punky

Gettin' Vertical

Aggressive Moves!

Tomb Wader

KIDS TO ADULTS K-A CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

VISIT

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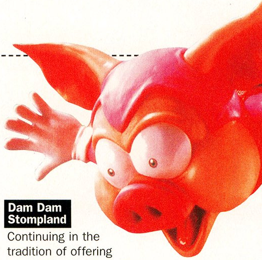
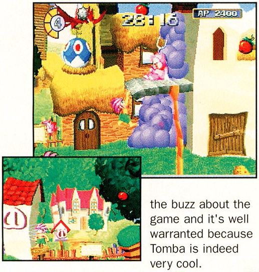
Updates

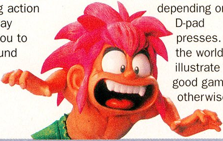


Ore! Tonba

This cool platform game is by Tokuo Fujiwara who was a planner/producer at Capcom and has now formed his own company, Whoopee Camp. This explains

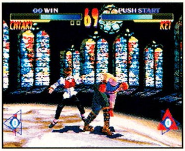


the buzz about the game and it's well warranted because Tomba is indeed very cool. Imagine a side-scrolling action game with rock-solid play mechanics that allow you to travel into the background and back into the foreground at certain intervals mixed with RPG-type menu elements. No screen shots can truly capture how much fun the game is to play or really show you how well the animation's of the characters and objects you interact with are. The title is on its way here courtesy of SCEA for release later in the year.



Critical Blow

The parade of 3-D fighters continues with this latest Japanese release from Branpresto. Critical Blow has standard graphics and mediocre character design, however it does have a very solid fighting engine. It features eight characters who each have an arsenal of about three to six special attacks. The basic fighting moves are handled with two buttons which control punches and kicks with variations depending on D-pad presses. It's not going to set the world on fire, but it does illustrate the obvious point that good gameplay can elevate an otherwise sub-par game.



Dam Dam Stompland

Continuing in the tradition of offering unusual and bizarre games, Sony Music Entertainment (PaRappa) has released Dam Dam Stompland. The game's main premise revolves around stepping on your opponent's shadow. It offers an interesting Travel Mode where you seek out worthy computer foes, but the fun lies in challenging other human combatants. The jury is still out on whether this game is interesting or addicting enough to keep people playing it for long periods of time. Tune in next month to find out if this game is still in the *OPM* rotation.

Vote For Imports!

We've received a fair amount of responses for import games you'd like to see released in the States, but it's time to kick it into overdrive! What better way to get you to vote than to offer up some free prizes, so we got Manga Video to sponsor our Import Game Request Top 5. That's right, every month we'll pick through your requests and randomly draw one winner. All you have to do is write, fax or e-mail your requests for import games you'd like to see and why. That's not so hard, is it? So get to it!

Write in:

Import Game Request Top 5 c/o
The *Official U.S.*
PlayStation Magazine
1920 Highland Ave. Suite 222
Lombard, IL 60148

Fax it:

(630) 916-7227
Subject heading:
Import Game Request Top 5 c/o
The *Official U.S.*
PlayStation Magazine

E-mail it:

dindo_perez@zd.com
Subject heading:
Import Game Request Top 5 c/o
The *Official U.S.*
PlayStation
Magazine

Upon notification of winning, you'll receive a list of hot video titles to choose from including *Ninja Scroll*, *Macross Plus the Movie*, *Ghost in the Shell* and much, much more. As the year continues, you'll be able to select upcoming releases like *Landlocke* (*Masamune Shirow*) and *Red Hawk*!

GHOST IN THE SHELL
NINJA SCROLL
MANGA VIDEO

(For official contest rules turn to page 126.)

Games You'll Never Play

By Joe Fielder

With thousands of games coming out in Japan each year, it goes without saying that not every title makes its way to U.S. shores. Some reasons they don't procure U.S. distribution are that heavy Japanese cultural themes are usually difficult for most U.S. audiences to relate to, or the companies' overseas branches are already translating as many games as they possibly can, or many titles are just plain bad. In the following feature, we take a look at games that reside within all three categories of import (the good, the bad and the quirky, if you will), which only share one correlation among them: They'll never be released in the U.S. We begin with the import games we've ranked the lowest and build up to titles you should be fighting to bring out in the States.

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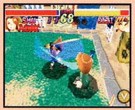
Toshinden Kids (Nitoshinden)



Nitoshinden in no way resembles the play mechanics of any other title within the Battle Arena Toshinden series. Though all fighting games have "rock-paper-scissors" at their core, Nitoshinden's bouncy, cartoony feel makes it seem much more like a one-on-one take on Whack a Mole!. While certainly not worth purchasing, the game is such an oddity that it's worth a look if you know a poor sap who may have purchased an import.

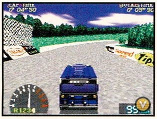
stats:

PLAYERS	PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER
1-2	TAKARA	TAKARA

Choro Q 2

By Trent C. Ward

While Takara's original Choro Q was neck and neck with Namco's Ridge Racer for the most popular first-generation PlayStation driving game, this sequel just runs out of gas. The tracks are certainly creatively designed (such as glass-roofed tracks and underwater ravine stretches), though they're quite a bear to play through. Sure, sharp turn after sharp turn can be fun, but not if the control mechanics make it hard to even drive in a straight line. On the positive side, the game offers a huge car selection and the option to upgrade various parts of your vehicle after winning races, but those perks are not nearly enough to make the title worthwhile overall.

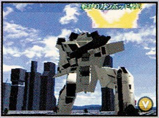


stats:

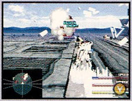
PLAYERS	PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER
1-2	TAKARA	TAKARA

Macross Digital Mission VF-X

By Greg Kasavin



The original *Macross* animated series (known as *Robotech: The Macross Saga* in the States), with its memorable and complex cast, not to mention its incredible spacecraft designs, remains a classic to animation and science-fiction fans. And despite all its failed offshoots and cross-licenses, many *Macross* fans remain hopeful that the original will eventually see a successor in one form or another. Some of us, for instance, keep waiting for that perfect Macross video game. From the look of Macross Digital Mission VF-X, the wait must continue. Macross VF-X looks elegant at times but ultimately fails to capture the emotion, excitement and the sheer visual splendor of its source material. Truly, this is a game not even aficionados of animé could love, though they might want to look at all the pretty pictures.

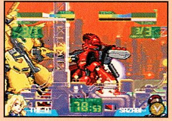


stats:

PLAYERS	PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER
1	BANDAI VISUAL/BIG WEST	UNIT

Gundam: The Battle Master

By: Jeff Gerstmann



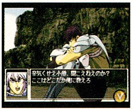
Ever since the Rock'Em Sock'Em Robots toy debuted way back in the '70s, our culture has had a certain soft spot in its heart for robots that hit each other in the head. Gundam: The Battle Master is a very pretty 32-Bit video game take on RESM, but unfortunately the playability is about as basic. The mobile suits (another term for "mech") aren't all too agile and are saddled with nearly identical moves, such as punch, kick, laser, sword and hover, and quite a few have mirrored special moves to boot. Though the graphics and animations are nice to look at, Gundam: The Battle Master is much too simple a fighter to make the U.S. cut.

stats:

PLAYERS	PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER
1-2	SONY	BANDAI

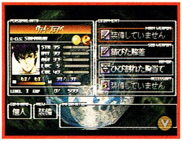
Bastard!!

By Greg Kasavin



辛気くせえ小僧、聞こえねえのか？
ここはどこだか俺に教えろ

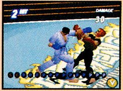
Without a doubt, a game with a name like this has to be a fairly strange import. Bastard!! is a first-person 3-D engine that crawls along even slower than King's Field (down to 10fps at times) melding with a seemingly never-ending stream of Japanese text and a story that revolves around a hedonistic warlock by the name of Dark Schneider, who resides within a future where technology is extinct. (Sound like a comic book? It is.) On the plus side, Bastard!! carries a rather unique RPG combat system, wherein special attacks become available based on how the different members of the party are lined up, making them combine their powers with the abilities of the others. It's interesting, but there's no real focus to the game. Players end up simply milling about, fighting, and eventually snoring.



stats:

PLAYERS	PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER
1	SETA	SETA

Fighting Illusion: K-1 Revenge



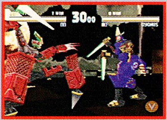
Remember T*HQ's 32-Bit polygonal kickboxing title, K-1 The Arena Fighters? Well here's the latest model. This version has a new Training Mode to test out your moves, seven more real-life fighters rounding it out to a cast of 15 (each with his own specialty move, such as Stan the Man's left and right hooks), secret characters, improved graphics (better animations, cleaner polygons and a trailer effect on fast moves) and more. If you're a true kickboxing fan and you loved the first K-1, then you should start writing some letters.

stats:

PLAYERS	PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER
1-2	SONY	XING ENTERTAINMENT

Zero Divide 2: The Secret Wish

Zero Divide 2 is a sped up, graphically trimmed down sequel to a game that was released among the first generation of Sony PlayStation titles, and which stood significantly taller than its peers. Ten different robots (and a few more hidden ones, making it several more than before) must once again battle it out tournament-style to decide the fate of a world threatened by a technological overlord: This time, it looks female. Zero Divide 2's nice graphics and 60 fps play are stunted by its uninspired fighting engine.

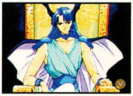


stats:

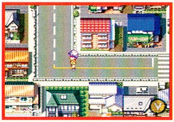
PLAYERS	PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER
1-2	ZOOM	ZOOM

Bloody Bride

By Glenn Rubenstein



Bloody Bride is an interesting mix of two popular Japanese gaming genres: dating simulations and role-playing games. You assume the role of the last vampire prince and must find a bride among the girls you go to high school with. To be able to know how to ask someone out on a date, you have to take advice from your female vamp friends. Then, to be able to get them to say yes, there's "training" to improve your charisma, appearance and the like. From there comes the actual dates, which require dealing with odd social situations like talking your way out of eating a cookie (something vampires aren't able to do). And all the while, you must stalk the night to keep your strength up. Crazy? Oh sure, and if you know even the basics of the Japanese language, maybe kooky enough to consider shipping in.



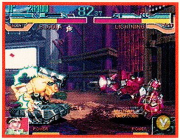
stats:

PLAYERS	PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER
1	ATLUS	ATLUS

Cyberbots

By Jeff Gerstmann

Cyberbots is another fighting game with Rock'Em Sock'Em Robots-style action, but since this one is by the folks at Capcom, it's significantly better and prettier than the rest. On the downside, it also feels a lot like many other similar 2-D Capcom fighters with special moves and supers galore, even though it utilizes a four-button instead of a six-button control system. Serious fans of the DarkStalker, Marvel and Street Fighter series may want to finish their Capcom gaming library by picking it up. Heck, it even has a robotic version of SF's Akuma hidden inside.



stats:	PLAYERS	PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER
	1-2	CAPCOM	CAPCOM

Fighter's Impact

By Jeff Gerstmann

Fighter's Impact is an interesting fighting game that features lackluster character design and some strange combo mechanics. All of a fighter's moves readily run together, and that means as long as different moves are executed, the combo keeps going. If a duplicate move is performed, the character "overheats" and is stunned for a brief moment, and therefore ends the combo. But as long as you can keep mixing it up and using different techniques, it's very possible to run strings of 15-20 moves. Another interesting side note is the "Style Select," which you choose before each fight. Each fighter (with only two exceptions) has three different styles, each of which constitutes an entirely different costume and set of moves.

stats:	PLAYERS	PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER
	1-2	TAITO	TAITO

Final Fantasy IV

Save for a new cinematic introduction, Final Fantasy IV for the PlayStation is an exact port of the 1991 Super Famicom game (which came out in the U.S. in edited form as Final Fantasy II for the SNES). Assuredly, this title is highly regarded as among the best in the series, but sadly the graphics and sound seem deficient when running on a 32-Bit system. If the company had compiled the first three or four FF games onto disc, then it would've easily been a must-have.

stats:	AVAILABILITY	PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER
	NOW	ASCII	ASCII

Asuka 120% Excellent: Burning Festival

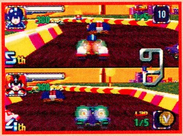
By Jeff Gerstmann

Asuka 120% Excellent: Burning Festival is about as quirky as import games get. This all-girl fighting game is set in a high school, with each character and background representing a different school club (such as chemistry, volleyball, tennis, gymnastics, biology and so on). The special moves follow this theme as well, so tennis players hit tennis balls at opponents, the biology student fights with her frog in tow and on down the line. Though its specials are easy to execute and its graphics are far below par, the title retains a certain crazy charm. For instance, nearly every move achieves multiple hits, though if characters punch or kick at the same time, they're countered and made to stop. Even though it's not necessarily something we'd recommend you spend money on, we have to admit we hold a grudging respect for it.

stats:	PLAYERS	PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER
	1-2	SONY	FAMILY SOFT

Rockman Battle & Chase

By Jeff Gerstmann



Mega Man's clearly tired of having to run around everywhere, so he's turned his dog, Rush, into a car and has taken him down to the track. Choose from a cast of classic Mega Man (called Rockman in Japan) characters—such as Protoman, Ice Man and Guts Man—then select a track and a corresponding opponent. If after racing five laps you win, you get to take a part off the track-owner's car. Some of these parts are useless, but a few can make your car nearly unstoppable. The ultimate object of the game is to strip all your opponents' cars clean, as though you were running a virtual chop shop. Originally planned for U.S. release, the game has been in limbo and Capcom is undecided about its future.

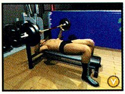
stats:

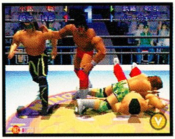
PLAYERS	PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER
1-2	CAPCOM	CAPCOM

Toukon Retsuden 2

By Greg Kasavin

Toukon Retsuden 2 is the sequel to the polygonal PlayStation grappler Activision released in the U.S. as Power Move Pro Wrestling. While the company bagged on bringing out this follow-up, it's nonetheless one of the best and most realistic wrestling games to date. Though the game text is all in Japanese, the control is a bit stiff, and the play mechanics take some getting used to, the title is a lot of fun to play once you get going. And the graphics are among the top of its genre. The only reason that wrestling fans might not want to start demanding a U.S. release is that Toukon Retsuden 3 is coming up fast. Hopefully the third time will be even more charming, and the minor grievances we had with TR2 will be ironed out. We'll keep you informed.



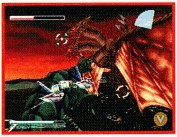


stats:

PLAYERS	PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER
1-2	TOMY	YUKE'S

Gamera 2000

Whether or not you've ever seen a Japanese *Gamera* monster movie doesn't really matter. Gamera 2000 is a behind-the-back shooter in which you assist a giant flying turtle in saving the world. Your vehicle varies between a futuristic gunship and a Neo-Akira motorcycle as you and your shelled friend take genetic monstrosities and alien invaders left and right in Panzer Dragoon-style shooting action. Perhaps best yet, playing the game in Family Mode will allow the second player to act as Gamera himself. Excellent graphics, great gameplay, cheesy FMV sequences, the occasional giant monster and the fact that it's nearly entirely in English make this a better contender for porting. A few U.S. companies have expressed interest, but it appears the big turtle will stay on the other side of the Pacific.



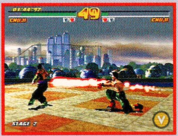
stats:

PLAYERS	PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER
1-2	VIRGIN	DIGITAL FRONTIER

Tobal 2

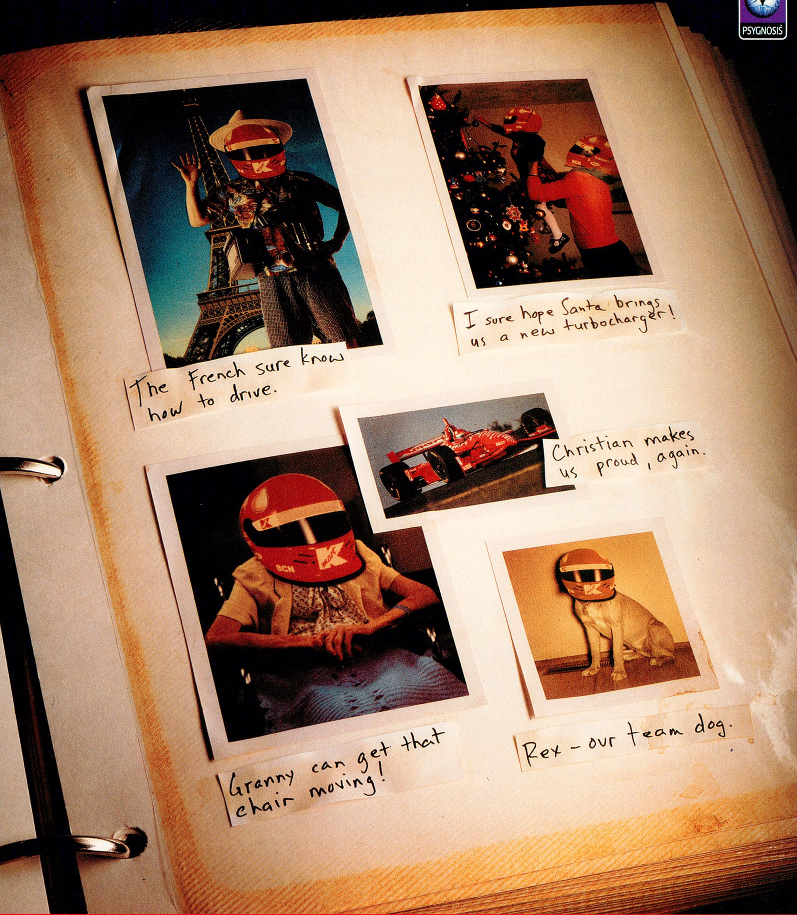
By Jeff Gerstmann

Tobal 2 does exactly what a sequel should do—take all the best qualities of the fast-moving original and make them better. While the basic fighting engine is the same, the title is now more combo-oriented and every character has a fireball move (although it steals a little of your life, making the battles a little more strategic). Besides the fighting side, the RPG part of the game has been expanded as well, with more dungeons than before and an entire town to explore. Perhaps most impressive is that every denizen of this world can be played in the tournament after they're beaten, for over 200 characters in all (including the Squaresoft "mascot," the Chocobo). If there's any game that readers should want imported, this is the one. SCEA has expressed that it currently has no plans to bring it out here, and since Tobal No.1 supposedly sold poorly, SCEA probably never will.



stats:

PLAYERS	PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER
1-2	SQUARE SOFT	DREAM FACTORY


The French sure know how to drive.
I sure hope Santa brings us a new turbocharger!
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Granny can get that chair moving!
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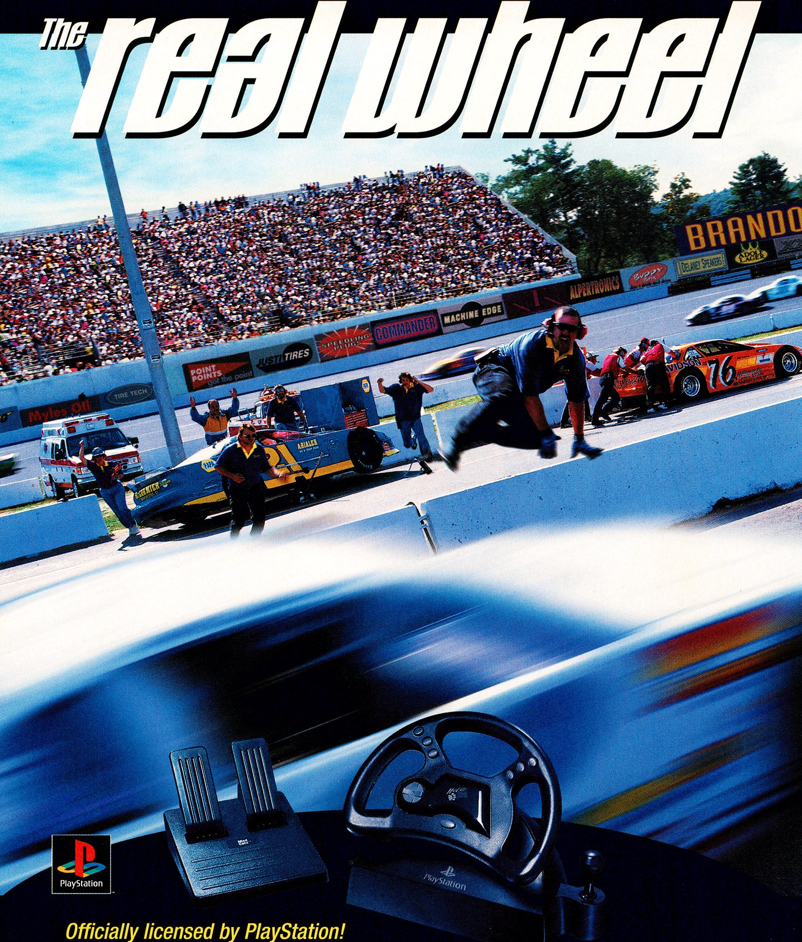
The real wheel


BRANDO
ALPERTRONICS
COMMANDER
MACHINE EDGE
JUSTI TIRES
POINT POINTS got the point
Myles Oil
TIRE TECH
76
21
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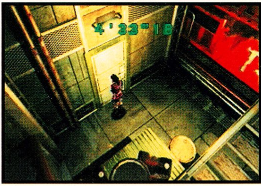
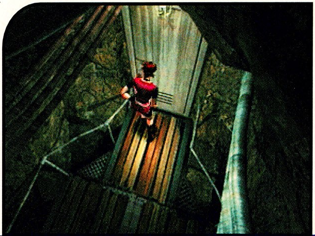


RESIDENT EVIL 2

Terror once again plagues Raccoon City

Originally slated for a March 1997 release, the long-awaited sequel to one of the best-selling PlayStation games of all time is finally here! Was Resident Evil 2 worth the wait? Absolutely, unequivocally yes!

Those of you who read *OPM*'s January cover story are well aware of the reason behind RE2's numerous delays; close to 65 percent finished with what was intended to be Resident Evil's sequel, producer Shinji Mikami decided to pull the plug, because the game played too similarly to the original. In terms of workload, Mikami recently remarked to the Japanese press, developing Resident Evil 2 after abandoning the 65 percent complete game was "like making 3 after 2." When playing RE2, one gets exactly the same impression; the graphics, voice acting, story and overall presentation are so superior to the original, it's more like playing Resident Evil 3 than 2!

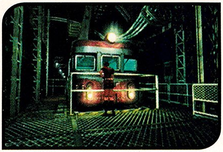


When beginning a game as either rookie cop Leon Kennedy or Claire Redfield, the sister of RE1's Chris Redfield, the first thing you'll notice is the B-grade live-action opening of RE1 has been replaced with a CG animated movie. Close to four minutes in length, the cinema easily is Capcom's most ambitious to date, although it can't quite match the photo-realism of Namco's best efforts. (Inanimate objects like cars and guns look fantastic, but Claire's and Leon's skin has a rubber-like appearance.)

Although the pair start out together, they quickly become separated and begin pursuing their own goals. Fresh out of the academy, Leon quickly goes into protect-and-serve mode rather than the more logical (albeit more cowardly) get-the-heck-out-of-Dodge mode and begins searching for survivors. Claire's interests, in contrast, are more self-serving; she just wants to find out what happened to her brother. If you haven't guessed already, the two discover the insidious bioengineering company Umbrella is up to its old tricks and apparently is responsible for the latest zombie epidemic. The fate of more than one Midwestern town may hang in the balance if Claire and Leon don't find some answers fast.

After the success of Tomb Raider, many wondered if Resident Evil 2 would make a move toward true 3-D, but such was not the case. You still have polygonal

"...so superior
like playing



Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine ratings at a glance

THE COLOR SCHEMES

BELOW ARE USED IN THE PREVIEWS AND REVIEWS SECTIONS TO INDICATE THE GAME'S GENRE:

- **Action/Adventure**
- **RPG**
- **Fighting**
- **Puzzle/Strategy**
- **Sports/Racing**
- **Platform**

THE RATING SYSTEM

●●●●● Excellent. A must-have game.

●●●●○ Very good. Well worth your time.

●●●○○ Good. Its flaws can be overlooked.

●●○○○ Below average, but not awful.

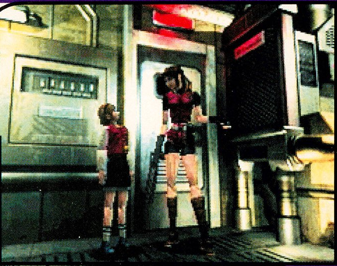
●○○○○ Almost offensive in its badness.

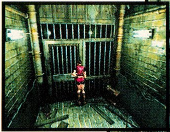
RESIDENT EVIL 2
PlayStation
CAPCOM

1 Player | Memory Card 1 block | Capcom

RE2 is more frightening than any movie in recent memory

RESIDENT EVIL 2'S MOVIE-CALIBER STORY, FILLED WITH BETRAYAL, LOSS AND REDEMPTION, IS LIGHT-YEARS AHEAD OF ITS CELEBRATE PREDECESSOR.





characters moving about static, prerendered backgrounds, which is something of a double-edged sword. The backgrounds are incredibly detailed, while the fixed cameras give RE2 a very cinematic look. All of this detail comes at a price, however; you still have to endure frequent disc access and the occasionally awkward camera angle.

to the original, it's more Resident Evil 3 than 2!"

Also, the prerendered backgrounds still make it difficult to know which elements you can and can't interact with. These shortcomings apparently didn't bother the 2.8 million people who purchased RE1, and it probably won't deter anybody from buying RE2, but you should at least be forewarned that Capcom did little to remedy these weaknesses. (RE2's voice acting and translations, however, are light-years ahead of its predecessor, which was universally slammed in these categories.)

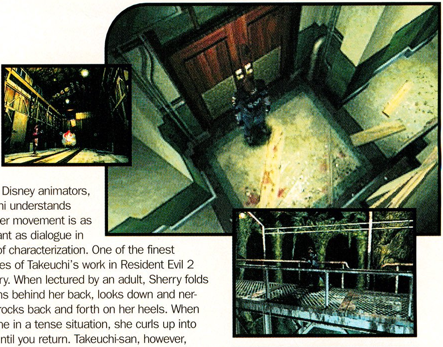
Besides the game's awesome new Zapping System (see sidebar), RE2 plays remarkably similarly to the original. You basically run around searching for keys and solving minor puzzles to gain new items and access to new areas. While the emphasis of Resident Evil 2 is rightfully placed on action, Capcom could have made the puzzles a little bit harder. Here's just one example of an RE2 "puzzle": The inscription at the base of a statue reads, "To obtain the key to open your heart, I'll wait for the Unicorn, the beautiful beast." Inserting the Unicorn Medal into the statue's convenient circular slot yields—you guessed it— the Heart Key! Not exactly Riven, is it?

To quibble over RE2's simplistic puzzles, however, is to miss the point of the game entirely. The point of the game is to create a cinematic, blood-drenched adventure that scares the pants off you, and RE2 achieves this so brilliantly its other shortcomings can easily be overlooked. As in the original, the real challenge of RE2 is

Zapping System

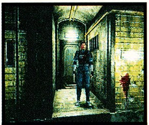
Although gamers had the option of playing as either Chris Redfield or Jill Valentine in the original Resident Evil, the two quests played like separate games and didn't overlap much. In contrast, Leon's and Claire's actions in Resident Evil 2 directly affect one another. For example, If you remove the sidepack and machine gun from a certain storage locker when playing through the game a first time as Leon, the items won't be there when Claire opens the locker. Additionally, a computer-controlled lock in the Umbrella lab requires the fingerprints of both Leon and Claire to open. If you forget to register your fingerprint when playing as Leon, Claire will be unable to open the door.

You also get to witness events from each character's perspective. Playing through the game the first time, you come across the wreckage of a downed helicopter on the roof. During your second trip through Resident Evil 2, you actually get to see the chopper crash.



rationing your ammo and game saves. If you shoot at anything that moves and save every time you find a typewriter ribbon, you simply won't get very far. It's far better to avoid conflict whenever possible and to save only after major plot events.

Speaking of plot, RE2's is far better developed than its celebrated predecessor. This is particularly apparent in the relationships forged between the game's main characters—Leon and Claire—and their respective sub-characters—the beautiful but mysterious Ada Wong and Sherry Birkin, the 12-year-old daughter of Umbrella scientists Annette and William Birkin. Ada journeyed from Chicago to Raccoon City in search of her boyfriend, yet another Umbrella scientist. (Is Raccoon City populated entirely by cops and scientists?) The chemistry between Leon and Ada is undeniable, but will decisions made in Ada's past come back to haunt her? Like Newt in *Aliens*, the plucky Sherry manages to outlive nearly every adult citizen of Raccoon City—without the aid of weapons. She and Claire come to share a sort of Newt/Ripley surrogate daughter/mother relationship. (In addition to *Aliens*, RE2 borrows heavily from two other James Cameron films: *Terminator* and *T2: Judgement Day*. If George Romero was the spiritual father of the original Resident Evil, then Cameron is the proud papa of Resident Evil 2. (I wonder if the third one will be set on a doomed ocean liner?)

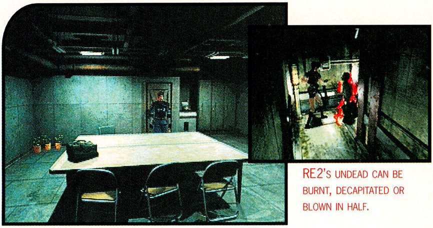


While I already touched on RE2's vastly superior voice acting, there is another reason you end up caring far more for RE2's characters: Jun Takeuchi's inspired character animation. Like master Disney animators, Takeuchi understands character movement is as important as dialogue in terms of characterization. One of the finest examples of Takeuchi's work in Resident Evil 2 is Sherry. When lectured by an adult, Sherry folds her arms behind her back, looks down and nervously rocks back and forth on her heels. When left alone in a tense situation, she curls up into a ball until you return. Takeuchi-san, however, probably should exercise a little more restraint when animating adults, who tend to slash the air with broad arm gestures like hammy stage actors when speaking. This is most likely to compensate for the lack of lip-sync within the game and hopefully will be corrected in subsequent sequels.

Ms. Masami Ueda also deserves special recognition for her moody, atmospheric soundtrack. Her somber piano music, in particular, is almost certain to become a trademark of the series.

In short, Resident Evil's edge-of-your-seat gameplay, improved graphics, compelling story and unique Zapping System more than make up for the game's few shortcomings. RE2 also is more frightening than any recent horror movie. (I didn't so much as flinch during a recent screening of *Scream 2*, while RE2 practically made me jump out of my chair.) Kudos to Capcom for withholding this one until it truly surpassed the original instead of rushing out a lackluster sequel just to make a buck. Truly refreshing.

—Gary Mollohan



RE2's UNDEAD CAN BE BURNT, DECAPITATED OR BLOWN IN HALF.

box score

Pros

- **Innovative Zapping System**
- **Dramatically improved graphics**
- **Terrific story**
- **Truly chilling**

Cons

- **Reduced yet annoying disc access**
- **Overly simplistic puzzles**
- **Having to check your back seat for zombies after playing until 12:40 a.m.**

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine Rating

● ● ● ● ●

We give you Lara Croft's whole story!

take the plunge
dress for success
buy her magazine

- This special publication takes you deeper into the world of the digital heroine more than anything else before it. We offer huge and easy-to-use strategy sections to Tomb Raider and Tomb Raider II, in addition to a revealing look at the woman who personifies video games this year, Lara Croft!
- We went to England to visit Lara's creators at Core Design to get the inside and final word on her creation and meteoric rise to the top!
- Find out what the future has in store for Lara and ponder as we did who could play her IF Hollywood decides the world needs a Tomb Raider movie starring Lara Croft.
- Get the inside word from the witch doctors at 3DFX about the upcoming Voodoo^2 PC accelerator card. Read what they have to say about Lara and her rise to fame on the PC.

3Dfx makes lara cooler, baby

EIDOS INTERACTIVE CORE

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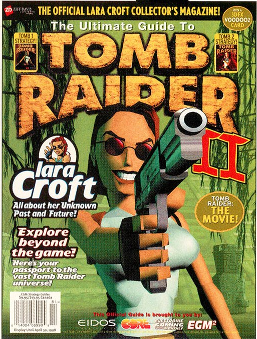
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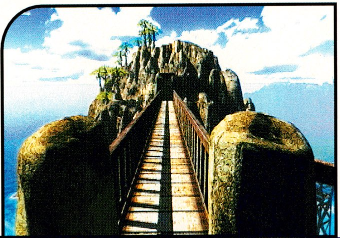
RIVEN
THE SEQUEL TO MYST

Open a door into a whole new world

I've never been able to understand what it was about Myst that left gamers so dramatically polarized. Some respected game publications would hail it as the greatest game ever made, and yet it found its way to the "Worst Of..." lists of other, equally respected publications. Some people said it was too hard; others, too easy. Personally, I enjoyed the game immensely, and if you think that might color this review, well, consider yourself warned.

For those not familiar with its predecessor, Riven is an adventure game in the classic, old-school PC style, complex and cerebral—which is to say, almost entirely lacking in any sort of action whatsoever. The player views its large, detailed world from a first-person perspective, almost as if looking at a series of photographs. Navigation and exploration is performed by pointing the cursor in a direction or at an item of interest, at which point the perspective shifts (either abruptly or with the occasional full-motion animation transition) to the desired location. The meat of the game consists of a series of puzzles incorporating mechanical devices with visual or sound cues; the puzzles must be worked through in order to find your way through the game's five large areas. There's no inventory screen to mess around with; all the puzzle elements are self-contained. There isn't even much of a story to begin with; you pretty much have to figure your objectives out as you go along.

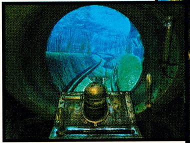


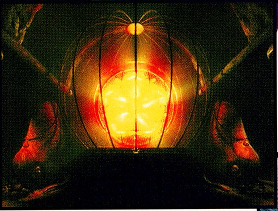
It doesn't sound like the most exciting experience, but excitement—at least, the adrenaline-fueled kind of excitement—isn't what the developers were going for. Rather, they wanted to create a world that the gamer is swept into, a realistic, involving universe that seems more like a living place than a bit of diversionary entertainment. And they succeeded.

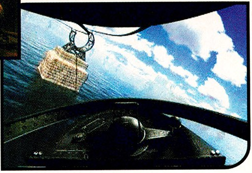
The graphics are stunningly photorealistic, from the sweeping landscapes to the smallest elements of the game's many mechanical constructs. The use of realistic textures, in particular, helps give the game a believable look that the largely artificial-looking Myst lacked.

The sound adds equally to the engrossing experience; the generous use of stereo helps make the impressive sound effects particularly realistic. In the manual, the designers write "for goodness sake,

"Riven is an superior to







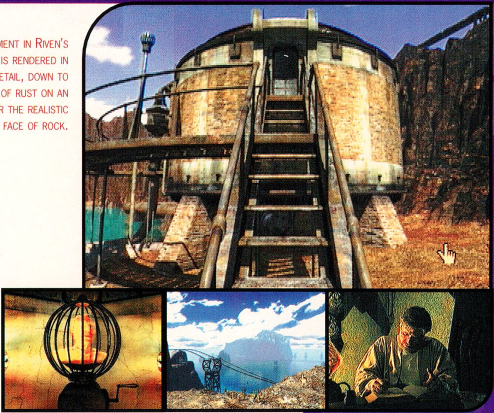
Full-motion animation cut-scenes, like the one shown at right, serve as transitions between the major areas of Riven's large world.

RIVEN
THE SEQUEL TO MYST
PlayStation
Acclaim

playSTATS

1 Player | Mouse Compatible | Memory Card 1 block | Acclaim

This time around, the adventure is more real than surreal



EACH ELEMENT IN RIVEN'S ENVIRONMENT IS RENDERED IN PAINSTAKING DETAIL, DOWN TO THE SPOTS OF RUST ON AN IRON RAILING OR THE REALISTIC TEXTURE ON A FACE OF ROCK.

use a pair of headphones!" They're not kidding.

The story, once it truly begins to unfold, is complex, personal and involving. But the most impressive feature of Riven is the way in which it integrates the game's puzzles into the story. In Myst, the puzzles were primarily there for puzzles' sake, and didn't have much to do with the rest of the game. In Riven, it's much rarer to come upon a puzzle and say, "Aha, a puzzle." It's much more likely to wonder, "Now, how can I get that damn door open?" Each puzzle seems to have a purpose, which aids the suspension of disbelief considerably.

Riven is not without its flaws; graphic quality deteriorates significantly during FMA sequences and when a moving element is overlayed on a static background. The occasional sound hiccup or loading pause can break things up a bit, as can switching between the game's five discs (I want DVD!). And as with any puzzle-oriented game, it's easy to get frustrated when you can't find a quick solution to a problem. But all in all, Riven is an outstanding adventure, superior to Myst in every way. It's not one for Doom-heads or action fanatics, but it is an excellent choice for anyone looking for a new world to get lost in.

—Joe Rybicki

outstanding adventure, Myst in every way."

box score

Pros

- Beautiful graphics
- Top-notch sound
- Complex, involving story
- Challenging (yet sensible) puzzles

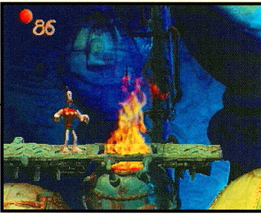
Cons

- Some glitches mar the great graphics and sound
- Switching between five discs gets tedious
- Some puzzles can be frustrating

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine Rating

● ● ● ● ●

SKULLMONKEYS



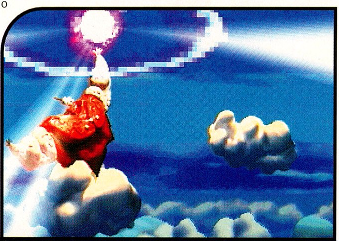
Take a healthy dose of off-beat humor. Add clay. Mix vigorously.

"A BAD man fell from the sky..." So begins one of the most unusual platformers to date. Skullmonkeys, developed by DreamWorks Interactive and The Neverhood, follows the adventures of Klaymen, hero of the unorthodox PC adventure The Neverhood, as he tries to save his home world, The Neverhood, from the diabolical clutches of the evil Klogg (the aforementioned bad man). To do so, he must run, jump and bounce his way through over 90 different platform levels populated by Klogg's minions, the Skullmonkeys, and other assorted baddies.

Sounds pretty standard, right? At its heart, Skullmonkeys is indeed a straightforward platformer. A few extremely unusual power-ups and abilities spice things up a bit, but the fundamental gameplay is pure and simple.

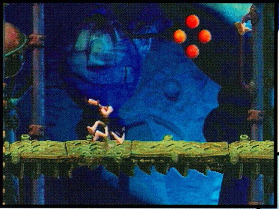
So what makes Skullmonkeys so unusual? Clay. Lots of clay. See, all of the characters and the majority of the environment are created and animated with the use of clay and stop-motion photography, a process seen in popular shows like, say, *Gumby*. This—combined with the off-beat humor of The Neverhood (the developers, that is)—gives the game such a unique and entertaining style that it's a pleasure to simply sit and watch. The multi-leveled worlds are as richly detailed as the characters, making Skullmonkeys one of the most visually stimulating games to come along in quite some time.

Now, I'd be the last person to claim that graphics are more important than gameplay. But all else being equal, truly exceptional graphics can make the difference between a good game and a great one. Skullmonkeys may be just such a case.

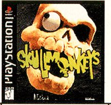


You wouldn't see me raving so much about the graphics in this game if the gameplay were not as solid as it is (check out our review of The Lost World if you want proof). True, it's not *quite* as extraordinary as the graphics, but Skullmonkeys does enjoy some unusual elements which help set it above the norm. Take, for example, the utterly bizarre collection of power-ups, like the Hamster Shield (three floating hamsters which spin around Klaymen, protecting him from attacks) or the Universe Enema (a "smart bomb" which destroys every enemy on the screen while beefing Klaymen up to look like Thor). But perhaps

"One of the games to come



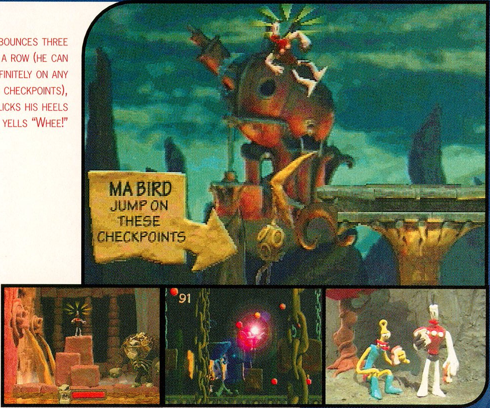
THE DEVELOPERS' DECISION TO ALLOW INFINITE CONTINUES MEANS YOU CAN BE AS RECKLESS AS YOU WANT TO BE, PERFECTLY CAPTURING THE WACKY SPIRIT OF THE GAME.



playSTATS

1 Player | Memory Card 1 block | Elec. Arts

This platformer excels in gameplay almost as much as in graphics

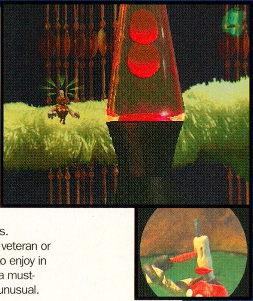


WHENEVER HE BOUNCES THREE TIMES IN A ROW (HE CAN BOUNCE INDEFINITELY ON ANY OF THESE CHECKPOINTS), KLAYMEN CLICKS HIS HEELS TOGETHER AND YELLS "WHEE!"

the most innovative power-up is the Phart Head, which creates a gaseous pseudo-Klaymen which can be sent ahead to scout out the terrain and even take care of a few enemies. If Phart-Head Klaymen gets hit, control reverts to the real Klaymen, frozen in his original position. But if Phart-Head Klaymen survives for a certain amount of time without taking any damage, the real Klaymen takes over, making a significant amount of headway (pardon the pun) from his previous position.

The more fundamental elements of platform play are all present and properly implemented, as well; control is quick and precise, enemies are plentiful but not impossible to beat (although I have to say that the Bosses seem strangely easy), and the levels are large and plentiful. The levels could certainly use a bit more variety, but the game as a whole seems pretty well-balanced; whenever I found myself nearing the point of frustration or a feeling of monotony, I reached a new area soon after. This gives the game a hyper pace—which is just exactly right, considering the huge number of levels.

most visually stimulating along in quite some time."



Whether you're a platform veteran or not, you will find something to enjoy in this game. Skullmonkeys is a must-have for any fan of the truly unusual.

—Joe Rybicki

box score

Pros

- Amazing, unusual graphics
- Good, solid platform gameplay
- Unusual power-ups, etc.
- The best game music I've ever heard

Cons

- Some levels tend to get monotonous
- Bosses are way too easy to beat
- Most levels are pretty dark

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine Rating

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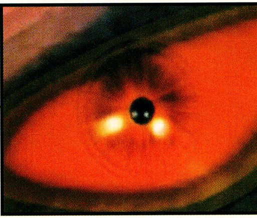


BLOODY ROAR

Altered Beast meets Fighting Vipers

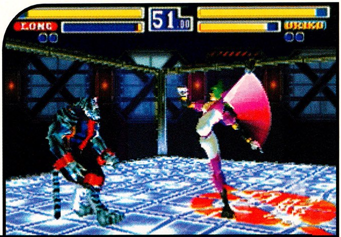
Last seen under the name "Beastorizer" on American soil, Bloody Roar was renamed by Sony to reflect its original Japanese title.

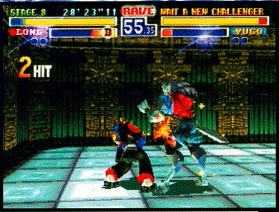
In comparison to other fighting titles, Bloody Roar has a unique type of gameplay, but by dissecting the game's innards it's possible to discern various features that other games share. A good way to describe its elements is to take concepts from Sega hits Altered Beast and Fighting Vipers. If you are not familiar with Altered Beast, it is game where you can transform your character into a beast to gain special abilities. In Bloody Roar's case, morphing into an animal is the norm, and the new abilities you gain consist of additional moves and combos. The fighting scenario is comparable to Fighting Vipers whereby you fight in a confined arena surrounded by either steel fences or walls. You can also break through the fences if you defeat your opponent by propelling him or her against the barrier. Sounds similar, doesn't it?

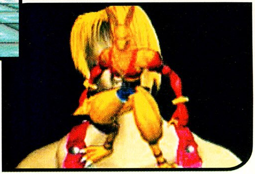
Controls are very easy and simple, good for beginners. You have the standard punch and kick buttons, plus the rave and beast buttons (which I will explain later). Most combos for fighting games are generally challenging, but not for Bloody Roar. Some of the moves require only one button to be pressed several times to initiate five continuous attacks, which in the end only counts as a two-hit combo. Remember Soul Blade, where you could press the same button a few times and come out with a series of combo attacks? This is much like that; that's why it's so simple. Beginner players will have a blast playing this game, but the lack of challenge will keep seasoned players away. Veteran players prefer the challenge of learning combos and moves instead of defeating the game in one sitting. But you can chain combos to produce a multi-hit combo, which can make up for the lack of challenge in pulling off a single combo; in the end, the combo system has its pluses and minuses.

Feeling a bit wild? Want to see the animal side in you? Transformation from human to beast can only be achieved if the Beast Bar is ready. In beast form more moves will be available to you. If you happen to sustain major blows from your

"Feeling a
to see the







You can choose from eight characters. All can transform to beast forms ranging from a bunny to a wild boar.

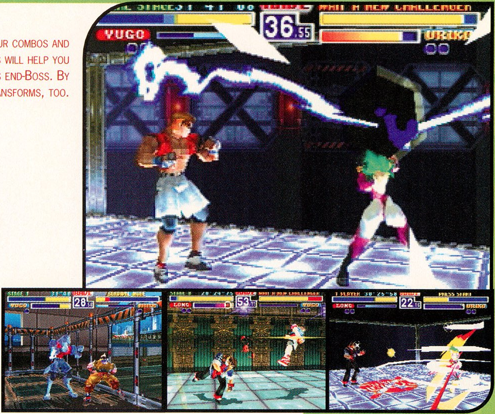
playSTATS

PlayStation
Bloody Roar
Unleash the beast within.

1 or 2 Players

Memory Card 1 block

SCEA

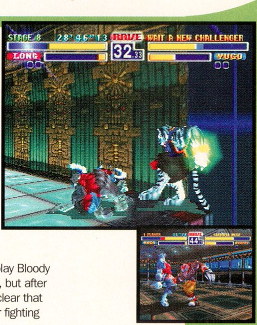


Learning your combos and basic moves will help you take out this end-Boss. By the way, she transforms, too.

opponent you will turn back to your original human form. To regain the beast form you have to build up the Beast Bar again by means of attacking your opponent. The purpose of your animal side is to give you more power in your attacks. If you happen to be in a desperate situation turn on the Rave feature which in turn increases your character's speed and power. This is only possible in beast form.

The counters and throw recoveries add another dimension to each fighter's skills. Counters are self-explanatory: Block your opponent's attack and in return deliver a damaging attack toward your opponent. Throw recoveries are a plus. You can recover in midair from throws, and if your opponent happens to propel you skyward to air juggle your butt, you can break out of it and land on your feet.

bit wild and wanting animal side in you?"



The look of the game is decent. Backgrounds are average and could use some work, but what will impress you are the animations of the characters. The animation as a whole is fairly smooth and clean. The moves are fantastic and if you are able to link the combos it is amazing to watch.

At first, I was hesitant to play Bloody Roar because of its concept, but after a few test runs it becomes clear that it's actually one of the better fighting games around.

—Dindo Perez

box score

Pros

- You can link combos to produce multihit combinations
- Great animations
- Good controls

Cons

- Needs more challenging moves for veteran players
- Too easy to beat
- Needs more characters

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine Rating

● ● ● ◐ ○

GET IN TOUCH WITH YOUR GUN-TOTING, TESTOSTERONE PUMPING, COLD-BLOODED MURDERING SIDE.

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MACHINE GUN

TEEN
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AGES 13+
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

- ✦ The fastest killing machines in the world.
- ✦ 45 lethal missions.
- ✦ Huge 3-D worlds.
- ✦ Customizable weapons and armor.
- ✦ One- or two-player combat.
- ✦ It's enough to excite any would-be assassin.

Armored Core™

playSTATS

- 1 or 2 Players
- Memory Card 1 block
- Namco

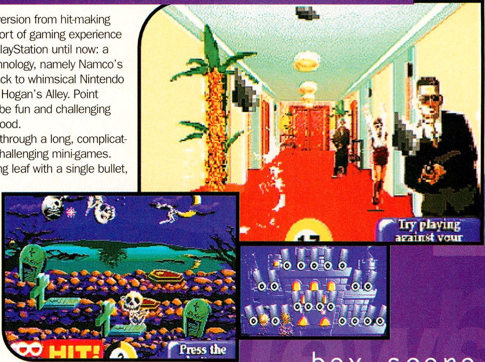
POINT BLANK

SHOT
Press the

Light-hearted shooting fun from Namco

Point Blank, the latest arcade conversion from hit-making juggernaut Namco, delivers the sort of gaming experience that has been sorely absent on PlayStation until now: a gun game that uses the latest technology, namely Namco's hyper-accurate Guncon, while harkening back to whimsical Nintendo hits of yesteryear, such as Duck Hunt and Hogan's Alley. Point Blank demonstrates that a gun game can be fun and challenging without polygonal graphics or buckets of blood.

Rather than requiring the player to blast through a long, complicated mission, Point Blank is a collection of challenging mini-games. Among other tasks, you must shoot a falling leaf with a single bullet, protect a comical explorer from leaping piranhas, blast apart leaping skeletons, shoot a series of numbers in sequential order and protect the Earth from asteroids. The most "violent" missions require you to shoot Hogan's Alley-style cardboard cut-outs of thugs or ninjas, and there's nary a drop of blood to be seen.



Point Blank has just enough variety to keep the player from getting bored. There's even a Quest Mode that allows the gamer to help a pair of bumbling explorers find a hidden treasure and an Arrange Mode that gives the player the opportunity to unlock new mini-games. What's more, Point Blank is one of the best two-player gun games of all time. Bust this one out at a party, and even non-gamers will be begging for a try.

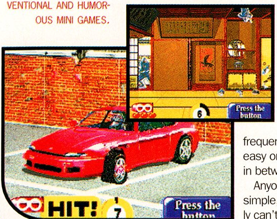
RATHER THAN REQUIRING YOU TO PLAY THROUGH A LENGTHY QUEST, POINT BLANK IS A COLLECTION OF CHALLENGING, UNCONVENTIONAL AND HUMOROUS MINI GAMES.

Point Blank may lack the white-knuckled excitement and compelling story of Namco's most recent gun title, Time Crisis, but it will make you reach for your Guncon again and again, confident you do a little better than last time—a hallmark of any good game.

On the down side, disc access slows down the action a bit, and each mini-game frequently is either way too easy or way too hard, with little in between.

Anyone who likes light gun or simple, light-hearted games really can't go wrong with this one.

—Gary Mollohan



box score

Pros

- Loads of variety
- Great Two-player Mode
- Simple but addictive gameplay
- The accuracy of Guncon

Cons

- Wildly varying difficulty
- Grating music
- Incompatible with any light gun other than Guncon

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine Rating

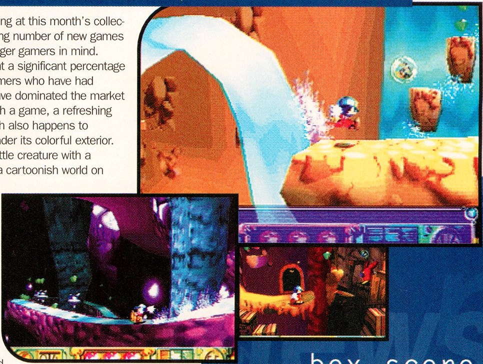
● ● ● ◐ ○

playSTATS

1 Player | Memory Card 1 block | Namco

KLONOA

Enter the "two and three-quarters" dimension



As you've probably noticed by looking at this month's collection of reviews, there's a surprising number of new games out which are designed with younger gamers in mind. What's even more surprising is that a significant percentage of those are equally enjoyable for adult gamers who have had enough of the violent action titles which have dominated the market over the past few years. Klonoa is just such a game, a refreshing departure from the depressing norm, which also happens to pack a solid, innovative platform engine under its colorful exterior.

Players take the role of Klonoa, a furry little creature with a spirit for adventure, as he travels through a cartoonish world on a standard platform-style quest. The game uses a "two-and-a-half-D" engine similar to the one Pandemonium! made famous, with a few added, er, dimensions: First, the levels are noticeably more complex, with loads of corkscrew turns and multileveled areas; and secondly, the engine actually uses the third dimension much more frequently, often allowing players to chose between several different branching pathways and also giving Klonoa the ability to throw items into the foreground or background. The end result is that the levels, even while restricting the player to a single path at any one time, appear much more non-linear than other platformers of this type.

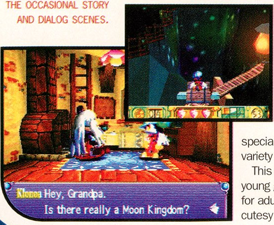
The graphics are simple, but quite good; the frequent use of flat-shaded polygons gives the game a clean look that is refreshing in comparison to some texture-heavy titles, a look which bears resemblance to games like Tobal No.1 or Colony Wars. It also allows the game to move along at a nice, smooth (if frantic) pace.

The game is complex enough to be challenging, yet fast-moving enough to be addictive. The ability to pick up different enemies, some of which give Klonoa special abilities, adds further variety to the platform formula.

This is a perfect platformer for young gamers, and equally good for adults who can look past the cutesy exterior. It's just plain fun.

—Joe Rybicki

VARIED LEVELS, LIKE THE MINE CART-STYLE RIDE SHOWN AT RIGHT, KEEP THE GAME FROM GROWING AT ALL MONOTONOUS, AS DO THE OCCASIONAL STORY AND DIALOG SCENES.



Klonoa Hey, Grandpa.
Is there really a Moon Kingdom?

box score

Pros

- Intricate level design
- More depth than similar platformers
- Nice, clean graphics
- Simple, addictive play

Cons

- The complex levels can get confusing
- Some may not like cutesy graphics

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine Rating

● ● ● ● ●

playSTATS

Analog Controller Compatible

1 Player

Memory Card 1 block

Elec. Arts

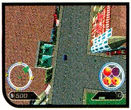
PlayStation
Auto Destruct

AUTO DESTRUCT

The streets just got a whole lot meaner

The formula of adding weapons to cars and setting them loose on each other may be wearing a bit thin, but EA manages to squeeze it for at least one more worthwhile game with Auto Destruct.

Players scream around the streets of major U.S. cities in a souped-up car while working to eliminate a terrorist organization that's been, well, terrorizing innocent people. The game consists of an impressive number of short missions with objectives ranging from transporting dignitaries to stealing high-tech weapons. Of course, you'll also have to take out a few terrorists with your vehicle's guns, lasers, missiles, mines and so on.



The missions are fast-paced and action-packed; you even get to jump your car over a few ramps and perform other death-defying stunts. The controls are acceptable with the D-pad (although much more satisfactory with the analog stick), and the graphics, although nothing to write home about, do the job adequately. There's not much that's truly outstanding about Auto Destruct, but there's not much to complain about, either. It's worth a look, at least.

—Joe Rybicki

box score

Pros

- **Quick, simple, fast-moving missions**
- **Responsive controls**

Cons

- **Somewhat blocky graphics**
- **The city streets get repetitive**

● ● ● ○ ○

NAGANO WINTER OLYMPICS '98

playSTATS

Analog Controller Compatible

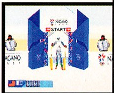
1 or 2 Players

Memory Card 1 block

Konami

PlayStation
NAGANO WINTER OLYMPICS '98
KONAMI

The only way to fall asleep while skiing



In an attempt to capitalize on the popularity of the Olympic Games, Konami has released Nagano Winter Olympics '98. They included all the major events, all the statistics on the different arenas and staging areas, and all the participating countries; but they left one thing out: fun.

Some of the events are more entertaining than others. For example, the speed skating events can be quite exciting with their down-to-the-wire photo finishes, and curling is an event that held a strange attraction for me, personally. But give the slalom skiing, bobsled or snowboarding a try and you'll wonder what the heck the developers were thinking. These three in particular are so ridiculously sluggish that one wonders if the designers, in preparing for this game, accidentally watched the events in slow-motion.

Still, there are plenty of folks who *really* get into the Olympics; if you're one of those, you may enjoy Nagano for its statistical side and attention to detail. But for the rest of you who might be looking to participate in some way in the *excitement* of the Olympics—as opposed to the statistics—you're better off watching them on television.

—Joe Rybicki

box score

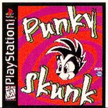
Pros

- **It sort of works as a simulation**
- **The animations are decent**

Cons

- **It's just too damned slow**
- **Some graphics are laughable**

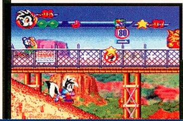
● ● ○ ○ ○



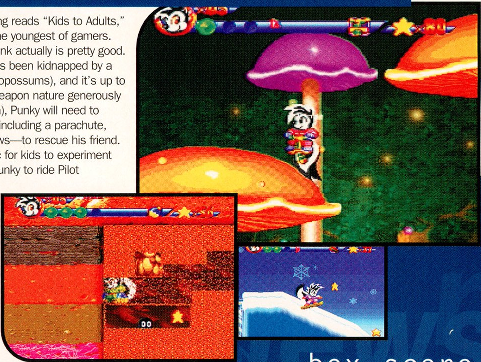
playSTATS

1 Player | Memory Card 1 block | Jaleco

PUNKY SKUNK



One wicked "weasel" kids are sure to love



Although Punky Skunk's ESRB rating reads "Kids to Adults," this game is aimed squarely at the youngest of gamers. Viewed in such a light, Punky Skunk actually is pretty good.

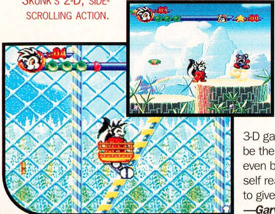
Punky Skunk's inventor friend has been kidnapped by a gang of opossums (at least I think they're opossums), and it's up to Punky to free him. In addition to the one weapon nature generously provides skunks (you know the one I mean), Punky will need to employ a variety of vehicles and devices—including a parachute, a snowboard, a pogo stick and digging claws—to rescue his friend. Each apparatus adds a new play mechanic for kids to experiment with. The parachute, for instance, allows Punky to ride Pilot Wings-inspired thermals to sail to new heights, while the digging claws allow the intrepid skunk to do a little Dig Dug-style tunneling. You can even drop boulders on enemies.

A variety of unique mini-games, which test kids' matching, dexterity and problem-solving skills, can be found between levels. In one such game, Punky sits on a television game show set while attempting to match cartoon animal heads that flash on the screen in front of him. In another, Punky must simultaneously light four pedal-powered light bulbs in an allotted time.

In addition to the mini-games, frequent Boss encounters introduce all-new challenges Punky (and the player) must face.

WHILE MANY KIDS FIND TOMB RAIDER-STYLE, 3-D GAMEPLAY INTIMIDATING, THEY SHOULD FEEL RIGHT AT HOME WITH PUNKY SKUNK'S 2-D, SIDE-SCROLLING ACTION.

Kids undoubtedly will be drawn to Punky Skunk's bright, colorful graphics and shouldn't be intimidated by the game's tried-and-true 2-D, side-scrolling gameplay. Health power-ups and extra lives are plentiful, and there are plenty of secrets for inventive children to discover.



If you have a younger sibling or a child who shows an interest in your PlayStation but can't handle the complexities of non-linear, 3-D gaming, Punky Skunk might be the game for them. You may even be surprised to find yourself reaching for the controller to give the game a try.

—Gary Mollohan

box score

Pros

- Ideally suited for kids
- Colorful graphics
- Varied play mechanics
- Unique mini-games

Cons

- If you're over 8 or 9 years old, don't even think of buying this one for yourself

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine Rating

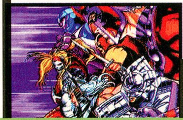
● ● ● ○ ○

PlayStation
X-Men
Children of the Atom
#1 Arcade Smash
Capcom
Acclaim

playSTATS

1 or 2 Players | Memory Card 1 block | Acclaim

X-MEN: CHILDREN OF THE ATOM



Acclaim digs up a fighting game from the past

I never knew Acclaim studied archeology...now I know. X-Men: Children of the Atom was supposed to be released for the PlayStation at the same time the Saturn version was released in stores. Unfortunately, due to continuous delays this version is now two years behind its supposed release date. Due to its present-day appearance, this title can be easily labeled as a game that belongs in the PlayStation archives.

Derived from the Street Fighter family, the gameplay is similar in terms of its fighting mechanics and overall look of the game. You have the traditional 2-D environment where you can move your character left and right, facing your opponent. Action is comparable to SF, but much faster, which I believe is too fast and jerky. You tend to lose your position while flying chaotically in midair.

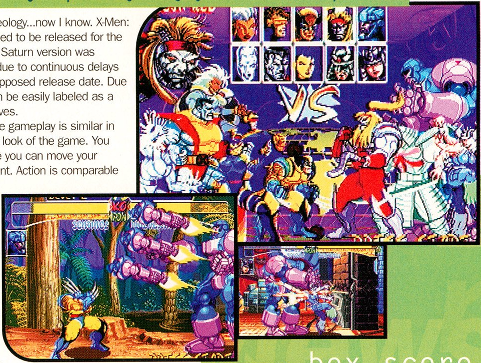
As you may already know, all characters are from the *X-Men* comic books, which you can recognize when choosing one of the 10 playable characters. There are also several Bosses that you have to defeat in order to finish the game.

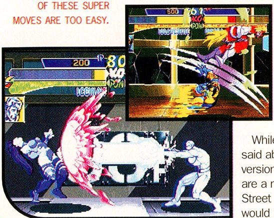
Fighting tactics are quite simple. You have the basic punches, kicks and projectiles, in addition to your super combos. What disappoints me in this category is that you don't have a variety of attacks and combos for each player. Additionally, fighting is not balanced. Most of the time you resort to only using super moves. You always end up trying to increase your Power Bar so that you can initiate a super move. Furthermore, the game hardly requires strategy. You can practically use one move to win match after match.

If I could go back two years and play this game, I would consider the graphics to be very good. But in the present time, it's disappointing to look at. I can't see how this title can compete with the rest of today's fighting games.

While lots of things have been said about its lateness, this PS version deserves a look if you are a newbie or a traditional Street Fighter fan; but all in all, it would have been better to put this game to rest. R.I.P.

—Dindo Perez





EACH CHARACTER HAS HIS OR HER UNIQUE AND DEADLY SUPER MOVE. WITH SF-STYLE FIREBALL OR DRAGON-PUNCH MOTIONS MOST OF THESE SUPER MOVES ARE TOO EASY.

box score

Pros

- Um...relive the X-Men comic experience on your TV
- Easy moves...easy to play
- Cool hidden Bosses

Cons

- Outdated graphics
- Unbalanced fighting without strategy
- Needs a greater variety of moves

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine Rating

● ● ○ ○ ○

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EXCLUSIVE DEMO DISC
PREPARE TO BE ROCKED BY GHOST IN THE SHELL
KILLER FINAL FANTASY VII
THE LATEST ON DEATHTRAP DUNGEON NIGHTMARE CREATURES JET MOTO 2

Issue #1– $15
October 1997

Ghost in the Shell Feature
Final Fantasy VII Strategy

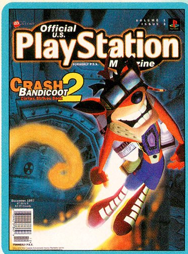
Demo Disc includes:
playables: Intelligent Qube, PaRappa the Rapper, Ace Combat 2, Fighting Force
non-playables: Tomb Raider 2, NFL GameDay 98

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine
PaRappa The Rapper

Issue #2– $10
November 1997

PaRappa the Rapper Feature
Bushido Blade Strategy

Demo Disc includes:
playables: Crash Bandicoot 2, Croc, Armored Core, Madden NFL 98, Cool Boarders 2, Colony Wars
non-playables: NHL FaceOff 98, Ghost in the Shell


Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine
CRASH BANDICOOT 2

Issue #3– $10
December 1997

Ultimate PlayStation Setup
Cool Boarders Strategy

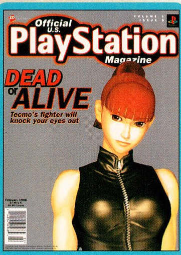
Demo Disc includes:
playables: Bushido Blade, Vs., Star Wars: Masters of Teräs Käsi, Jet Moto 2, Cardinal Syn, Ghost in the Shell, Moto Racer, Test Drive 4
non-playable: One

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine
RESIDENT EVIL 2

Issue #4– $10
January 1998

Resident Evil 2 Feature
Tomb Raider 2 Strategy

Demo Disc includes:
playables: NFL GameDay 98, CART World Series, Frogger
non-playables: Spawn, Final Fantasy Tactics, Pandemonium 2, Gex 2


Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine
DEAD or ALIVE
Tecmo's fighter will knock your eyes out

Issue #5– $10
February 1998

Dead or Alive Feature
1997 OPM Editors Awards

Demo Disc includes:
playables: NCAA GameBreaker 98, Tomb Raider 2, Command & Conquer: Red Alert, Crime Killer
non-playables: Pitfall 3D, Resident Evil 2, Vigilante 8, Monster Rancher

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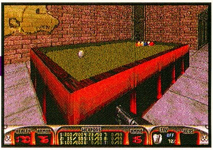
review recap

a roundup of the more notable titles of the past few months



Duke Nukem: Total Meltdown

Ace Combat 2

The sequel to Namco's hit game of airborne combat introduces advanced enemy fighter plane artificial intelligence as well as a host of new missions. The challenge of racing down a narrow ravine under enemy radar is just one example of the overall increased difficulty from the original version. The option of using a wingman offers assistance to those who have trouble flying the missions solo. With an array of distinct aircraft to earn, this is easily the PlayStation's best game of air-to-air fighter plane combat.

OPM ***Rating*** ●●●●●

Castlevania: Symphony of the Night

The latest installment in the venerable Castlevania series has been hailed by many as the best game of 1997. Following the adventures of the half-vampire Alucard as he seeks to put an end to Dracula's influence once and for all, Castlevania offers some of the best platform/adventure/RPG action on any system. With an impressive assortment of enemies, items, magic spells and other goodies, the game allows players to equip Alucard with various weapons and armor to best suit his needs and the gamer's playing style. The possibility of three separate endings adds a great deal of replayability—as if the superb graphics and haunting soundtrack aren't enough to keep gamers coming back for more. A must-have for any gamer.

OPM ***Rating*** ●●●●●

Colony Wars

Psygnosis' game of space combat has wowed players and viewers alike from its earliest stages of development. Spiced with some of the greatest graphics of any PlayStation title yet, its gripping space saga is enhanced by great controls and a relatively non-linear story line. Players are able to pilot an entire arsenal of unique spacecraft in an assortment of varied missions to help conduct a revolution against the threat of the oppressive empire. Its hair-trigger controls put most other games of space combat to shame.

OPM ***Rating*** ●●●●●

Crash Bandicoot 2

Naughty Dog and Universal Interactive took criticisms of the first Crash Bandicoot to heart when designing the sequel. Implementing a more user-friendly, less linear level design, the designers send Crash careening through 25-plus levels as he tries to help his former enemy Dr. Neo Cortex save the world. At least, that's Cortex's plan...perhaps Crash has something else in mind? In any event, the game enjoys some of the most technically proficient graphic design of any PlayStation title yet. An innovative, subtle mode of player assistance in a sense customizes the game to the player's skill. Still, the game retains the level of challenge from the first episode; this time around, it's just more honest. An all-around great platformer.

OPM ***Rating*** ●●●●○

Duke Nukem: Total Meltdown

The man that redefined the 3-D corridor shooter has brought his bad self to the PlayStation at last. The level design and tough humor are the highlights here; Duke's one-liners give the game a personality that many other titles in the genre lack. The game retains its controversial themes, including scantily clad women and some surprisingly harsh language (for a console, anyway). All three episodes from the PC version are intact, as well; there is even an entire episode designed exclusively for the PlayStation version, including levels which spoof popular PS titles. The overall look and feel seem dated, but Duke is still worth a look.

OPM ***Rating*** ●●●○○

Final Fantasy VII

The most hyped-up RPG ever makes good on its promise with superlative graphics, a solid game engine and an amazing story. Complaints of the game's initial linearity are squashed under the weight of FFVII's overwhelming merits. There's a huge world to explore, a universe to save and a variety of arcade-style mini-games to keep things moving along briskly. RPG purists who are immune to awe may complain of the game's extremely cinematic presentation. Ignore them. Final Fantasy VII will redefine the genre.

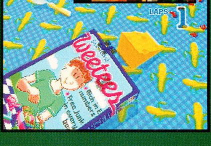
OPM ***Rating*** ●●●●●

recap pick of the month

Micro Machines V3

Without a doubt one of the more unorthodox racers to come along in quite awhile, Micro Machines V3 puts players at the wheel of one of a number of tiny vehicles modeled after the popular toys of the same name. Courses range from billiard tables to breakfast tables, with familiar items like playing cards and cereal boxes serving as jumps and other obstacles for the miniscule racers. While it's good clean fun in Single-player Mode, the multiplayer capabilities bring out the worst in everyone. The Unusual Mode (which, granted, takes a bit of getting used to) awards points only when just one player remains on the screen. This means you'll resort to just about anything to knock your opponents off the track, resulting in some uproarious multiplay. Don't miss it!

OPM ***Rating*** ●●●●●



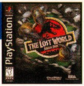
Final Fantasy Tactics

PlayStation
FINAL FANTASY TACTICS
SQUARESOFT

Continuing in the tradition of one of the most well-respected RPG series ever, Squaresoft serves up a new kind of adventure in the Final Fantasy saga. Tactics is equal parts strategy and role-playing, with a focus on intricate, complex, turn-based battles in the style of Konami's Vandal Hearts. Although the graphics are less impressive than Final Fantasy VII, Tactics more than makes up the difference with sheer depth of gameplay. Although the game is complex almost to the point of micro-management—which may put off less patient gamers—it enjoys a similar scope to other games in the series. This is one for strategy and RPG fans alike.

OPM ***Rating*** ●●●●○

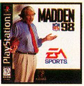
The Lost World: Jurassic Park



This game has a great deal of potential, but fails—in a big way—to deliver the goods. The absolutely amazing dinosaur animations fail to redeem this one; it manages to break every sensible rule of platform gaming. Horrible collision detection and frustrating (as opposed to honestly challenging) level elements make one wish dinosaurs had stayed extinct. One of its few positive qualities is the ability to feed on vanquished enemies to replenish your lizard's health. There's little else really positive to say about this game. If you're looking for nice graphics, the animation is almost without peer. But if you're into good gameplay, go dig somewhere else.

OPM ***Rating*** ●○○○○

Madden NFL 98



John Madden returns with the newest installment in the series that defined video football. This time, however, the competition is tough enough to push him out of the top spot. The game's admirable emphasis on strategy and simulation is tarnished somewhat by graphics which appear dated when compared to its competition. And although the artificial intelligence has been souped up a bit from last year's version, it still suffers from a few holes. Madden devotees will still enjoy it; others may want to scope out the field.

OPM ***Rating*** ●●●●○

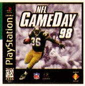
MK Mythologies: Sub-Zero

PlayStation
MORTAL KOMBAT MYTHOLOGIES
SUB-ZERO
MIDWAY

This unusual new title in the Mortal Kombat legacy isn't quite sure whether it wants to be a fighting game, a platformer, or an RPG—or a movie, for that matter. Its full-motion video sequences, atmosphere and fighting engine are on the whole true to the typical MK style, but the inclusion of some unsatisfactory platform elements can make things a bit more frustrating. Although it won't convert gamers who are ambivalent to the series, it is a new take on the franchise. This would best suit fans of the series looking for something new.

OPM ***Rating*** ●●◐○○

NFL GameDay 98



A completely revamped, polygonal graphics engine highlights the changes made in the newest installment of the premiere PlayStation football series. The return of "Total Control Passing" and an impressive array of options make this game the one to beat of the most recent season. Don't be fooled by its eye-catching graphics; this game is *tough*, even on the easiest settings. Dozens of codes and multiple levels of difficulty add more replay value than is given by the standard "Easter egg" awards of new teams or other unimpressive "goodies." Some interface issues hurt the game unnecessarily, but the incredibly realistic animation outweighs most graphic faults or other superficial flaws. Any football fan should enjoy it.

OPM ***Rating*** ●●●●●

Tomb Raider II

PlayStation
TOMB RAIDER II
EIDOS

With the unbelievable success of the original Tomb Raider, just about everyone was eagerly looking forward to the release of the sequel. No one really thought the game would be significantly different; most expected simply more of the same formula that made the original such a hit. And that's just what Tomb Raider II is: For the most part, it's just more of the same. Of course, this is by no means a bad thing, and some innovative level design takes the familiar engine in new directions. The inclusion of vehicles for Lara to pilot (a small speedboat and a nicely realistic snowmobile) adds some plain old arcade-style fun to a game that can become a bit too ponderous at times. And powerful new weapons up the ante a bit, an arsenal which includes a harpoon gun for use in the game's substantial underwater sections. It would have been nice to see a more significant improvement on the graphic side of things; occasional gaps and glitches hurt the overall presentation, but TR2 is still an excellent choice for any adventurer.

OPM ***Rating*** ●●●●◐

Star Wars: Masters of Teräs Käsi

LUKE SKYWALKER
ARDEN LYN

Additional Ratings at a Glance

Alundra	●●●●○
Armored Core	●●◐○○
Cool Boarders 2	●●●●○
Croc	●●●●○
G-Police	●●●●◐
Ghost in the Shell	●●●●○
Intelligent Qube	●●●○○
Jet Moto 2	●●●◐○
Marvel Super Heroes	●●○○○
MDK	●●◐○○
Moto Racer	●●●●●
NASCAR 98	●●●●○
NBA Live 98	●●●●◐
NCAA Football 98	●●○○○
NHL 98	●●●●○
NHL FaceOff 98	●●●●●
Nightmare Creatures	●●●◐○
Nuclear Strike	●●●●◐
Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee	●●●●○
One	●●●●○
Pandemonium 2	●●●◐○
Resident Evil Director's Cut	●●●○○
Spawn: The Eternal	●●○○○
Star Wars: MoTK	●●●○○
Street Fighter EX plus α	●●●●○
Test Drive 4	●●●◐○
Treasures of the Deep	●●●●○

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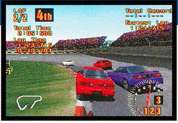
OPM GUIDE TO 98

The New year has officially begun and so has the speculation about what games we will see in 1998. We were wondering the same thing, so we went around and asked all the major PlayStation developers what their plans are for the coming year. With the E^3 show looming on the horizon, some lips were still a bit tight. Enough came clean to give us a good indication of what to expect.

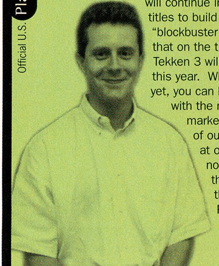


JIN
HWOARANG
ROUND 1
READY?

SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA

The year 1997 was a banner year for PlayStation as we continued to lead and set new standards for the next-generation video game industry. If I had to focus on highlights, I would include the successful launch of Final Fantasy VII and the introduction of our new software pricing structure. The record-breaking speed of Final Fantasy VII sales and our new competitively priced game titles opened up the video game industry to first-time video gamers, as well as providing our core audience with one of the most anticipated video game titles of the year at an affordable price.

Based on our unparalleled success throughout 1997, we have no doubt that the PlayStation's momentum will continue throughout 1998 and beyond. We will continue in 1998 to offer consumers both a wide selection of titles to build their PlayStation video game libraries as well as "blockbuster" titles. Without giving away too much, I can tell you that on the third-party side titles such as Resident Evil 2 and Tekken 3 will no doubt take the video game world by storm again this year. While I won't reveal our first-party titles, at least not yet, you can be assured that we will continue to provide gamers with the most creative and compelling video game play on the market. The only true limits to the PlayStation are the limits of our developers and third parties' creativity. If you look at our lineup of titles in 1997, you will see that there is no shortage of innovative, creative games emerging for the PlayStation. Last, but not least, I would like to thank your readers for their continued support of the PlayStation. We are looking forward to 1998!



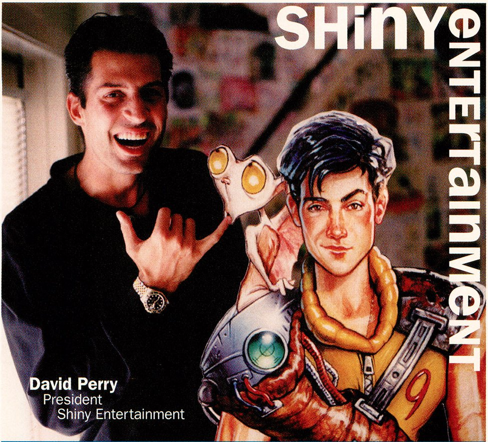
Andrew House
Vice President, Marketing
Sony Computer Entertainment America

Wataru Maruyama
Editor in Chief, *OPM*

Everyone here will be talking about their company's games and plans so I feel I should reveal some upcoming stuff about the mag. *OPM* has gotten off to an incredible start and I feel that this is only the beginning. The readers can look forward to lots of new features that will focus in on gaming trends and events as well as stuff you haven't really thought about before. It's really exciting because the wide appeal of the PlayStation has enabled us to venture into territories that game magazines have been unable to tap before.

Joe Rybicki
Assistant Editor, *OPM*

There's little doubt that this will be the best year yet for Sony's little grey box. What's most interesting to me is the fact that the PlayStation's game library is beginning to diversify in a big way. Several quality games designed with younger players in mind are in the works, as are more titles aimed solely at a mature audience. Expect to see the number of PlayStation owners expand dramatically as a result.



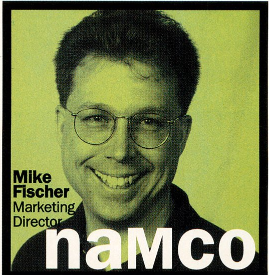
David Perry
President
Shiny Entertainment

Shiny is known for winning awards with every game they do, but these games are not manufactured copies of other people's games. They take the risks to give gamers new experiences.

Our three PlayStation titles are:
R/C Stunt Copter *(August '98)* -
An actual photo-realistic $2,500 model helicopter simulator. There is no other PlayStation game even similar; it is an entirely new style of game designed to show you what the Sony dual analog joystick is actually capable of. It also features the fabulous new TALKY(TM) technology where the game actually talks to you.

The Wild 9 *(September '98)* -
The movie deal is coming along nicely and Shane Salerno (a major Hollywood writer) is on the script. It is the first game to actually feature TORTURING. Like a long electric arm, Wex Major (the star) can grasp enemies or objects and actually thrash them around (screaming) until they scream no more. He can even grab vehicles for a ride, etc...

Messiah
(October '98) -
Featuring the Messiah technology, this game sets the standard for graphics on the PlayStation. Characters like Lara Croft were designed with around 700 polygons whilst EVERY character in Messiah is designed with over 150,000. The result is breathtaking. Gameplay-wise, yep that's different too...You play as a cherub (baby with wings) that can fly into the souls of his enemies, taking control of their bodies and using them as armor or camouflage. Playing anyone you like at any time, you can work your way through crowd scenes of police/prostitutes, you name it...



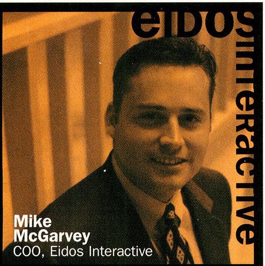
Mike Fischer
Marketing Director

The year 1998 is going to be a blockbuster year for Namco. We're starting out with ***Klonoa***, our first character-based action game for the PlayStation. With Klonoa, you really blow up your enemies—literally, with air—and then use them to bounce up on, launch at enemies or throw at other objects. Next out will be ***Point Blank***, our second game using the Guncon peripheral. Point Blank was listed by *EGM* as one of the 10 best arcade games of all time. Not a bad endorsement.

HWOARANG
LEI

Later on in the year, Namco will again venture into new territory with ***Tales of Destiny,*** an RPG adventure game that features characters you control across multiple generations and gorgeous anime-style video. This title came out the day before Christmas in Japan, and in just over a week became one of the best-selling PlayStation games of the entire year!

Let's see, there's also that fighting game we'll be putting out—***Tekken 3***. What can I say, it will be coming out sooner than you think, and it will include all the great features you saw in the arcade game plus new characters, game modes and secrets never before seen in the genre.

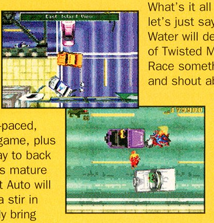


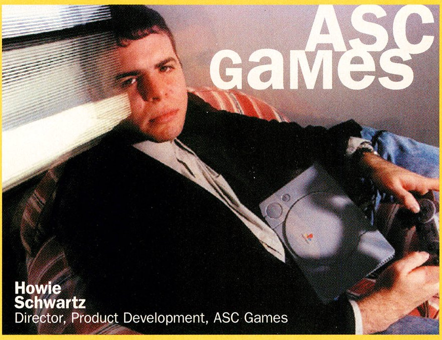
Mike McGarvey
COO, Eidos Interactive

The dominance of the PlayStation in 1997 exceeded even our lofty expectations. The success of the Tomb Raider franchise and Fighting Force helped move Eidos into a top 5 position as a PlayStation publisher. Looking at 1998, Eidos will continue to push the PlayStation envelop with a host of exciting new games and undoubtedly a few old favorites. Deathtrap Dungeon is shaping up to be a major contender. The solid gameplay, beautiful graphics and comical twist make it a great follow-up to Tomb Raider II. Core Design has established itself as the premier PlayStation developer and their next title, ***Ninja***, is a huge leap forward. Core is pushing the PlayStation to the limit with Ninja.

Omikron is another title we are extremely excited about. It's a futuristic action/adventure that incorporates a technology never before used in a video game. In addition, Eidos is continuing to develop for a variety of genres to appeal to the ever-growing number of PlayStation owners worldwide. And who knows? Lara Croft may one day show her face again.

ASC Games literally starts off 1998 with a bang by releasing one of the most original and controversial titles to ever hit the PlayStation, ***Grand Theft Auto***, coming this April. Car-theft, dangerous driving, high-speed police chases— Grand Theft Auto has everything one could want in a fast-paced, arcade-style action game, plus exceptional gameplay to back it up! Because of its mature content, Grand Theft Auto will undoubtedly cause a stir in 1998 and may finally bring the PlayStation its due respect as a mainstream entertainment medium. While ASC Games has not released details to the public as of yet regarding ***Dead In The Water***, *OPM* gets the scoop on this intense PlayStation exclusive scheduled for release fourth quarter 1998. What's it all about? Well, let's just say that Dead In The Water will definitely give fans of Twisted Metal and Wave Race something to scream and shout about. So, be prepared to get soaked in adrenaline in this fast and furious battle for high-sea supremacy! You want more? ASC Games has some more really cool and exciting stuff on its way for PlayStation owners in 1998, but you'll just have to wait until next time to read about them.





Howie Schwartz
Director, Product Development, ASC Games

Dindo Perez
Managing Editor, *OPM*

A few that will probably make it into your 1998 library will be Tekken 3, Resident Evil 2 and NBA Live 99, but what other games would be worthy to be in your collection? Without a doubt these games will be the best of the year, but rather than playing another sequel, I would prefer to see a totally new game. Unless the game has gone through a major overhaul...this I can accept. Metal Gear Solid is the game I've been waiting for, and now Messiah will be pushing the PlayStation's capabilities. More and more quality games are coming out, but I am still waiting for my perfect game.

Gary Mollohan
Assistant Editor, *OPM*

While Resident Evil 2, Tekken 3, Parasite Eve and Metal Gear Solid promise to thrill PlayStation owners throughout 1998, I'm still waiting for the PlayStation's equivalent of Donkey Kong Country. Donkey Kong Country for PlayStation? What kind of heresy is this? I don't *literally* mean I'd like to see a PlayStation side-scroller starring a rendered ape in a necktie; rather, I'd like to see a game that forces gamers and developers alike to reconsider the graphical power of Sony's 2-year-old hardware, just as Donkey Kong Country forced people to re-evaluate the power of the aging SNES.

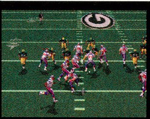
Could Messiah, the Shiny title David Perry wrote about earlier in this article, be such a game? Having never played the game or seen it in motion, I don't know, but the polygon counts David mentioned have me intrigued.

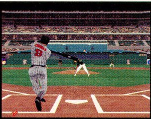
Whether it's Messiah or not, a PlayStation game that makes its competitors look archaic in comparison *will* come along, or I, pardon the pun, will be a monkey's uncle.

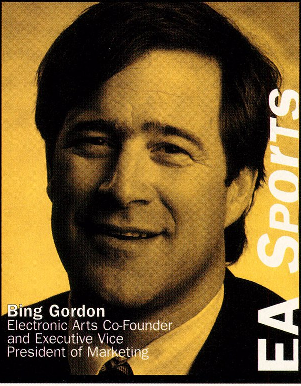
EA SPORTS

In 1997, PlayStation became the hottest video game console of the decade. In 1998, we believe it will become the most successful video game console of all time, thanks to next-generation products like Need for Speed III and Triple Play 99, and great market support by Sony. And because EA believes that 1999 will be even bigger and better, we will continue to invest in new titles, game designs and game technologies for PlayStation gamers.

Titles slated for '98 release:
***NCAA March Madness 98*–Winter '98**
***Triple Play 99*–Spring '98**
***NBA LIVE 99*–Fall '98**
***FIFA WORLD CUP 98*–Summer '98**
***NHL 99*–Fall '98**
***PGA TOUR 99*–Fall '98**
***MADDEN NFL 99*–Fall '98**
***NCAA FOOTBALL 99*–Fall '98**
***NASCAR 99*–Fall '98**





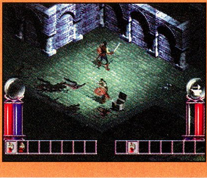


Bing Gordon
Electronic Arts Co-Founder and Executive Vice President of Marketing

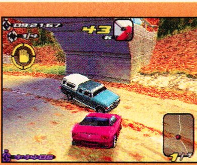
electronic arts

Here are some of the hot titles we'll be offering in the coming months:

Road Rash 3D is a completely new combat motorcycle racing game within the popular Road Rash franchise. The game uses internally developed technology based on a new 3-D engine. A complete 3-D world offers more than 150 kilometers of interconnected racing environments and animated bikers that were created using motion-capture technology.



Need For Speed III
(Scheduled release: March '98)
Need for Speed (NFS) is back with eight new licensed supercars and a twist. A law enforcement team is dedicated to stopping you or any speeders in Pursuit Mode. With five levels of police aggression ranging from high-speed pursuits and road blocks to tire spikes, speed now has a consequence. The game's 3-D environment places racers on 10 tracks with some shortcuts and alternate routes. The five secondary routes are available when earned and are designed to challenge even expert drivers.



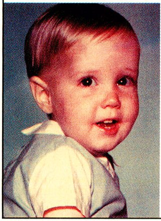
Diablo PlayStation Edition
(Scheduled release: March '98)
Diablo is coming to the next-generation console system. Working closely with the talent at Blizzard Entertainment, Electronic Arts' Diablo contains many of the familiar game characteristics found in the PC version in addition to several new features developed exclusively for the PlayStation. By combining the new and existing qualities, Diablo for the PlayStation offers a highly immersive environment and overall gaming experience.

ReBoot
(Scheduled release: March '98)
ReBoot is a 3-D action adventure where the player—a guardian named Bob—battles the destructive forces of Megabyte, a robotic villain. The game is set in Mainframe, an expansive, futuristic 3-D world that exists inside a computer. Derived from the popular Canadian television series of the same name, ReBoot's action centers on Megabyte's desire to take control of Mainframe. Characters are modeled with a single-skin technology, which applies a single texture over an entire character allowing for fluid animations.

WORKING DESIGNS

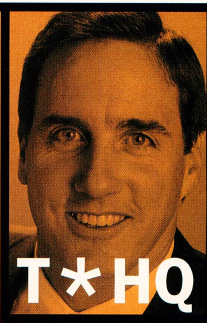
The year 1998 will be a banner year for the RPG hound—finally! And, the machine of choice will be PlayStation! In addition to a number of solid entries from other publishers, we have a lineup that should get virtually any RPG fan excited.

From interesting experimental hybrids like ***Elemental Gearbolt***, where the gun game is given an RPG-style story and anime treatment, to traditional character-driven pieces like ***LUNAR: Silver Star Story*** - Complete (this time on two CDs!), as well as virtually everything inbetween, there should be no room to complain. It truly will finally be the year of the RPG, and we'll be right in there. The only downer is the death of the Saturn. But my advice to rightfully bummed owners of it is to observe a moment of silence, then take a deep breath and move on to the PlayStation. Believe me, having been through the prolonged death of the TurboGrafx, I can tell them, whining, complaining and feeling bad won't erase all the bad decisions made by management and bring back the system—it'll just cause them to miss out on even greater gaming experiences on a system where people actually are doing things right! Can't we all just get along?



Victor Ireland

T*HQ



Brian J. Farrell,
president and CEO
T*HQ Inc.

Like most publishers, we see the PlayStation business continuing to grow in 1998. Hardware sales should continue to boom, and we expect that a lowering of the retail price point in mid-year will further fuel growth in the installed base. We anticipate that this hardware strength will be felt in our two major markets: the U.S and Europe. Obviously, this trend in hardware should provide a very strong market for software. For our part, T*HQ intends to focus on our core franchises, notably, ***World Championship Wrestling***, ***Bass Masters Classic*** fishing and Brunswick Tournament of Champions bowling. These popular sports provide an excellent crossover for the broad demographic served by the PlayStation.

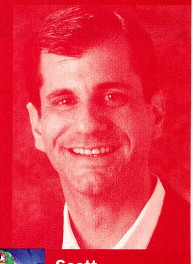
In addition to targeting these sports to mainstream America, T*HQ will also introduce two new original products targeted at the core gamer; ***Speed Tribes***, a futuristic game that propels players into the dangerous domain of heavily armed aercycle riders, and ***Dead Unity***, a 3-D-rendered graphic adventure set in an alternative reality. Because we see the installed base growing in numbers, we think the demographic of PlayStation users will also broaden to younger gamers. As a result, we will launch Nickelodeon's extremely popular ***Rugrats*** on the PlayStation in the fall of this year. Finally, the lowering of retail software price points with the Classics program will provide enthusiasts with terrific games, including our ***WCW vs. the World*** at very attractive prices.

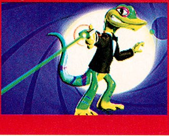
LEX LUGER
GIANT

Overall, 1998 should be a banner year for the PlayStation, for publishers and most importantly for gamers.

CRYSTAL DYNAMICS

The year 1998 holds a lot of promise for the video game industry and especially Crystal Dynamics. Many people may not realize this, but in the Asian calendar, 1998 is actually the Year of the Gecko. What a strange coincidence that our totally revolutionary title, ***GEX: Enter the Gecko*** ships in February of 1998. Those folks born under the sign of the Gecko are said to have a propensity for wall climbing, tail attacks and possess unique tongue grabbing skills.

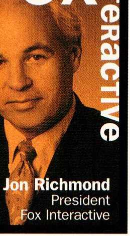




Scott Steinberg
Vice President
of Marketing
Crystal
Dynamics

FOX INTERACTIVE

The year 1998 will again be a strong year for the PlayStation in terms of console and software sales. In the past year games like Croc have shown that the PlayStation possess enormous possibilities in terms of processing power, and I'm sure that the stakes will continue to rise considerably in 1998. This coming year will also be one that successfully delivers more nontraditional titles. PaRappa has shown that "gamers" are far more diverse than previously thought.



Jon Richmond
President
Fox Interactive

Here's what readers are saying about ELECTRONIC GAMING MONTHLY...

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Eric Bigelow
Shelby, OH

"...a **Stunning** piece of work, *EGM* is by far the **Most Honest** mag in the business..."

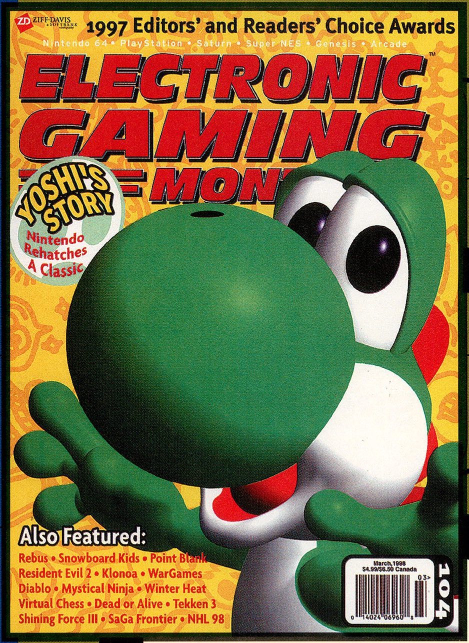
Chad Bell
Lincoln, NE

"*EGM* is the **BEST** video game mag, and has the **Coolest Reviews** of any magazine..."

Kevin Geaslin
Houston, Texas

"Your magazine **Kicks Ass.**"

Justin Balfozer
e-mail



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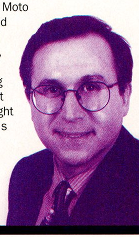
Dave Malec
Assistant Editor, *OPM*

This is definitely the year to look for mold-breaking titles for the PlayStation. Granted there are those long-awaited sequels that are finally due to arrive, but I think companies are realizing that gamers want to see something fresh. Last year's PaRappa the Rapper is a prime example of the innovative approach that I think we are in store for in 1998. Of course, I wouldn't mind seeing PaRappa on another world tour, but my eyes are focused on the upcoming Metal Gear Solid. Any way you look at it, this should be a record-breaking year for the PS.

GT INTERACTIVE

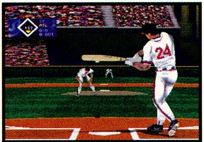
We believe the PlayStation will continue to be a strong gaming platform, and the offerings will be even more innovative and entertaining for players. Because developers have been designing games for PS for some time now, they are even more familiar with the technology, and that translates to even greater creativity in gameplay in 1998. It is a big year for GT Interactive as we build upon strong franchises with new, exciting PlayStation sequels this year, including those for ***Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee*** and ***Duke Nukem***.

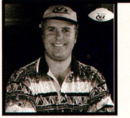
Our talented in-house development group, SingleTrac Entertainment (the folks behind some of the most well-known PS series, Jet Moto and Twisted Metal), will unveil new, fast-paced challenging games that also highlight SingleTrac's distinct brand of humor.



Ron Chaimowitz
CEO, GT Interactive Software

VR SPORTS



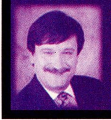


Happy Keller
Head Coach (head of VR Sports division)

VR Sports is looking forward to an awesome 1998. Building on the strengths of our 1997 rookie season, our new PS lineup includes ***VR Baseball '99*** with improved graphics, frame rate and gameplay, and ***VR Football '99*** with Jimmy Johnson featuring polygonal players, new graphics and enhancements to what already was the strongest football AI available. Rounding the year out will be our hot new 3-D racing title, ***Powerboat Racing***. With its realtime physics and fast frame rate, this game gives "immersive" a whole new meaning.

CAPCOM

Capcom believes the interactive entertainment industry will thrive in 1998. Sony will continue to grow and have a tremendous year. Capcom will have another good year, with a strong line-up of product and a few surprises up our sleeves. One will be a product that will be as unique to the gaming market as Resident Evil was when it was released in 1996. Satisfying consumer request will be the reappearance or two of Capcom hit products from our early days of gaming. Many of these titles consumers have lobbied for since the 32-Bit systems were first released. The fighting game genre that established Capcom as an industry leader will be as strong as ever in 1998.



Bill Gardner
President of Capcom Entertainment

INTERPLAY

The year 1998 is the year that Interplay develops a reputation for really outstanding PS titles. We are focusing on the PlayStation and doing it right, kicking it off with ***Crime Killer***. This high-speed pursuit game runs super smooth and super fast at an eye-popping 60 fps. Following that will be ***Messiah***, a truly awesome, innovative title like nothing ever seen before. And, of course, we have Earthworm Jim 3D, taking our segmented superhero to the forefront of 3-D technology.

Also ahead for us is the long-awaited ***Heart of Darkness***—five years in the making and gameplay as compelling as the artwork is beautiful.

Rounding out the year at Christmas will be ***Raze***, which promises exciting new elements never before seen in a fighting game. With this strong lineup, you can see we are committed to proving ourselves on the PlayStation this year.

Trish Wright
Vice President Interplay Productions

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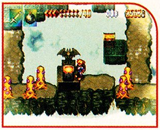
ALUNDRA

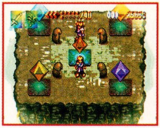
PART TWO

by Dave Malec

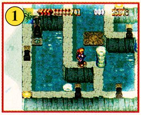
Last month we took you through the greater portion of Alundra, dissecting the difficult puzzles and highlighting the locations of Gilded Falcons and Life Vessels. In this issue we will use the same format to get you to the conclusion of Alundra's quest to destroy the evil Melzas. With this in mind, let's rejoin Alundra, who is faced with rescuing yet another villager from a deadly nightmare.

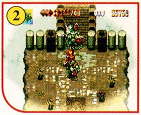
ELENE'S DREAM

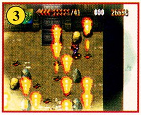




After the murder of Jess, Gustav will ask for your help in saving his daughter Elene from a nightmare. Meia will enter the dream with you, as you will need her help to save Elene. The first area you are faced with will require you to eventually want to reach the teleport plate in the bottom right. Follow Meia's lead and you will make it through with relative ease. The yellow, tentacled creatures will only attack you when you draw your weapon, so just try to avoid them. When you are reunited with Meia back at the area where you first entered the dream, jump on Meia's head to get across the chasm. You must now defeat all four of Elene's nightmares. Complete them in the following order–top left, bottom right, bottom left, top right. In the first room you need to reach the teleport in the top left. Once there, swim to the teleport in the bottom right of the next pool. The next area contains the four symbols of Elene's nightmares, with one of your goals being to activate all of the four switch plates found here. Next you will need to locate the key to open the door leading to the Hidden Eyes that you must defeat. Each of these giant slimes contain an eye in the center. Attack the slime until the eye reaches the bottom and then strike it with your sword. They are time consuming to defeat, but aren't too difficult if you key in on one at a time. Some portions of each nightmare overlap and you may need to return to enter a previously obstructed area. The key elements to each of the last three nightmares are highlighted in the pictures to the left.







#1 - Slide the ice pillars to reach all of the switch plates. You will have to jump around the one you slide up in the top-right portion of the puzzle.

#2 - Once you have activated the switch plate in the room with the four symbols, return to the ice area. You will find the pillar with the triangle on it has raised to allow you to reach the chest with the key.

#3 - You may recall seeing a couple of chests resting on pillars in an area guarded by a handful of ogres. The area directly above it has a wooden bridge with two fire symbols at the bottom of it. Once you have hit the final switch plate, they will lower to allow you to reach the chests below. The final room is scattered with flame spouts. Grab the rocks at the top and drop them on the four large holes to stop the flames and reveal the final door.

MAGIC BOOKS

Here are the locations of the four Magic Books found in the game, allowing you to cast Level 2 spells.

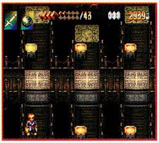
Earth Book - After opening Nirude's left hand, cross over it to the left.

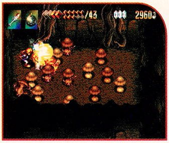
Water Book - Cross the bridge east of Fire Manor and then turn north.

Fire Book - Just before the Wilda the Dragon in the Torla Mountains.

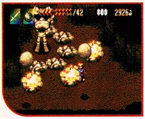
Wind Book - Outside of Nava's Keep. Pick it up before you enter.

THE MURGG WOODS

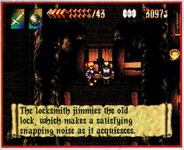




You must enter the Murgg Woods from the south, so follow your route to the Fire Manor and head north. After the first couple of caves you will have to deal with some mushrooms. Then follow the walkway to the left and go down. Follow the Murgg that disappears to reveal the Stone Golem. Now go to the upper left into the Murggs' secret den. You must then destroy the golem to leave the cave. Follow the trail to the next cave and look for the hidden opening that leads down to the next room. If you exit to the lower left, you will find the Willow Bow in the chest dropped by the Murgg. Enter the teleport to reach a room with numerous bridges, teleports and switches. Leave the room through the door at the bottom without touching anything. Outside you will walk past the chest you got the bow from, down the stairs and into the cave there. Fight the Murgg in the bottom chamber and then those that break through the wall. Go through the hole they made and enter the warp. You will be brought back to the bridge area. Activate the switch at the top and enter the top warp. Walk to the right through the secret door and enter the closest warp plate. Enter the warp plate on the right side of the shaking room you have entered. You will again be at the bridge area, but at the far left. Trigger both switches and exit using the bottom warp. Exit the room with the three groups of Murgg and follow the path to the first set of stairs blocked by thorns. Enter the cave at the end of the path and destroy all of the dark brown mushrooms. Use the door at the bottom to reach the warp leading to the bridge area. All of the blocks are now lowered, allowing you to cross to the final warp. Defeat the Murgg that try to stop you and leave the cave. Exit the Murgg Woods from the top of the screen.

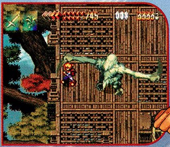


GIANT TREE TOWER



The locksmith jimmies the old lock, which makes a satisfying snapping noise as it acquiesces.

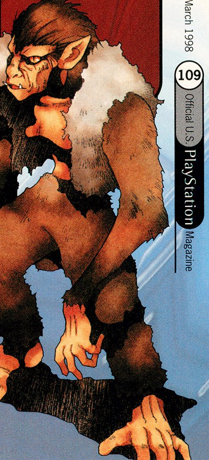
After your escape from the cell, you will need to set the Locksmith free. The large opening in the center of the tree leads to a locked door. Enter the smaller opening just to the left of it. When you open the chest in the center of the room, you will be faced with several waves of Murgg. Defeat them and exit by the stairs. In the next set of rooms you will need to activate two levers and then use the platforms to reach the switch, allowing you to exit by the stairs in the top right. On the next level you will see four chests, but won't be able to get them until later. The door in the bottom right leads outside. Follow the path to the left and drop down the chimney to free the Locksmith. He will go to the first building in the lower-left corner of the compound. Now, return to the locked door for him to open. Take the elevator up to the next floor and push the white turnstile near the door in the bottom left. The door will open and you will find another locked door. Go outside and work your way to the opening on the level below. Drop down from the room with the moving platform to reach the aforementioned chests. As you continue and reach a room with rocks in the corner, bomb them and drop down the hole. Open the chests and then use the switch to open the door to the right. Go up the stairs and drop down to the ledge below. Use the switch to obtain the key that unlocks the small hut outside. Once you have received the Elevator Key from the hut, return to the locked door. The key will be bent and you will need the Locksmith again. You will find him in the building at the base of the tree. Once you've opened the door, take the elevator up to face Zazan. When he uses his spinning attack, you will be unable to hit him. Wait until he stops.



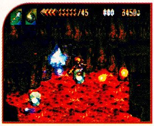
MERRICK'S SHOP

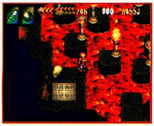
Turning in your Gilded Falcons to Merrick will gain you several nifty items. Here are the number of Falcons needed to receive each of them:

15, 25, 35, 45 - Life Vessel
20 - Olga's Ring - Increases attack power
30 - Silver Armlet - Increases def. power
40 - Life Axle - Recovers 1 HP every 3 sec.
50 - Spirit Wand - A mysterious wand...

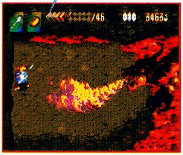


TORLA MOUNTAIN

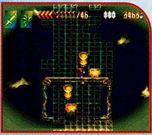




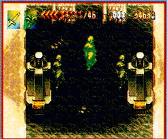
Once you're inside Torla Mountain and you reach the first large chamber, activate the switch and enter the opened gate. The room has five pulsating fireballs. Freeze the first one and jump on it. It will stay frozen while you are on it. Gradually freeze them at a higher position until you can reach the opposite ledge. From the room with the save point, return to the first large chamber via the opening to the far right. Go to the door at the top left. The four-way flamethrowers can be stopped by jumping on them. You will come to another room with fireballs and will need to cross a couple of times to reach the high ledge. All of this work eventually brings you to the two chests above the save point. One contains a key, while the other holds the Charm Boots, making you impervious to lava. Use the key to open the room containing seven candelabras. Light them in the following order: next to statue, top-right corner, bottom right, below octagonal plate and the last three as you come to them from the left. Drop off the bridge you come to for another Gilded Falcon. Across the bridge you will come to a statue. You need to light all of the candelabras in both the right and left rooms. You may need to jump when trying to light them to get them to catch. The room on the left requires you to push the frozen pillar to the left and then in a counterclockwise motion. In the right room, push the right pillar left and then down. Light the candelabras and push the left pillar right, up and left. Push the other pillar left and then up to light the last one. To defeat Wilda, use the Ice Wand and hit him in the head. Keep moving close and backing away to avoid his attacks and strike when the head is down. You will receive the Emerald Crest when you defeat Wilda.

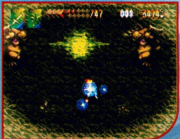


NESTUS' DREAM



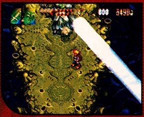
The two dungeons involved in the twins' dreams are exact mirror images of one another. Nestus' dream is blue, while Bergus' dream is gray. We'll use the first set of switches to the left as an example. You will see them trigger in the following order: bottom left, top left, top right, bottom right. Enter the teleport and trigger the switches in the following order to open the gate at the top: bottom right, top right, top left, bottom left. All of the puzzles follow this format. Once you've activated any switches, locate the same room in the opposite dungeon. In the same respect, if a block is lowered in one dungeon, it will be raised in the other. There will also be instances when you are faced with a mirror separating the two dungeons. Completing the puzzles will break the mirror. Ultimately you want to activate the switches turning the floating green statues into solid ones. The dungeons as a whole are not very large, so when in doubt of your next move, retrace your steps to find the doors that may have been unknowingly opened. Don't forget to check out the possibility of your next goal being in the opposite dungeon. At the end you will battle two creatures, each one acting in a mirror image of their counterpart. Stay to the outside to avoid getting sandwiched by their blasts. Destroying one will defeat both of them, so concentrate your efforts on one of the two Terror Twins. Once defeated, you will find yourself in the Murgg village. Destroy the statue of Melzas to escape from the cell. When you find Inoa in flames, destroy the four Murgg and then head to Beaumont's mansion for safety.



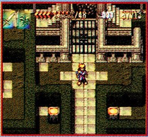


BATTLING RONAN

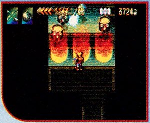
The day after the village is burned you must confront Ronan. You will be transported to a small island and Ronan is transformed into a hideous creature. Destroy the spheres to get a good shot at Ronan. In defense he will either fire energy bolts into the air or use his giant laser. Watch the direction the arm is facing to avoid the blasts. Once defeated you will watch a cinema and be given the Holy Sword. You must now visit Nava for the last crest.

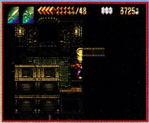


CASTLE IN THE LAKE



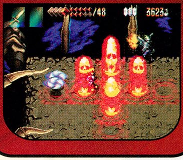
The Castle Shrine isn't too difficult to figure out. Use the Willow Bow to activate out-of-reach switches and to destroy the floating silver eyes. Eliminating the eyes will turn off certain energy fields. When you come across stubborn chains, strike them a couple of times with your sword to get them moving. The trickiest puzzle is the room with four skeletons in it with the secret passage on the left-hand wall. Once the energy fields are down, grab the barrel from the connecting room to activate the two switches. This will drop one of the two keys you need to continue. The second is a few screens back and was in a chest behind another energy field which is now deactivated. You will now be able to open the front gates and enter the hedge maze area. This isn't as bad as it looks. The slight indentations in the hedges are the spots where you can pass through them. The only catch is they only work in one direction. If you can't pass through them, then they only work from the other side. You may recall a chest that was out of reach before you entered the main gates. After the first teleport you use, go to the right to find it. You need to activate both switches to open the main doors to the castle. Take the opportunity to return to town via the teleport in the room in the upper-right corner.





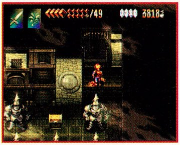
NAVA'S KEEP

Go into the basement of Nava's house to enter his keep. Work your way through the series of rooms until you reach the one with 12 spheres. You will now have to go through each of the 12 rooms and strike the spheres to open the door. Most simply require you to destroy all of the enemies to reveal or give access to the sphere. There are two rooms with several openings in the walls. You will need to explore these hidden paths to reach the spheres. Once the door has been opened, collect the Wind Book and the Life Vessel before entering the house. Place the Zolist's Stone in the shelf at the back of the room to receive the Diamond Crest. At this point Zorgia will appear and you must fight him. Zorgia will attack with spinning discs and a barrage of meteors that can be avoided by moving around. The discs can only be destroyed by crashing into the walls. When he lands, strike him quickly or he will let off a blast of energy.

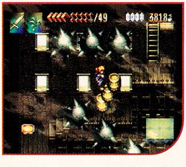


THE GREAT HALL

Once you have confronted Melzas, he will stop time. Your goal is to extinguish the six candelabras that light, allowing you to finally face Melzas. Being one of the most interesting dungeons, I feel I shouldn't give it away, however I will get you going in the right direction. Start by going up the stairs to the right and entering the first door you come to. Open the chest on the bookshelf to get a key and go downstairs to the library. Use the barrel at the bottom of the room to hop over the bookcases and exit to the right. Pass the three creatures and enter the next room to the right. Destroy the top-middle suit of armor and use the chest to hop to the door in the right corner. Use the key to enter the door and continue until you reach the room with three turnstiles. Push the turnstile on the right until it is almost even with the center one and then push it to the right.



Climb the stairs to the top and get the key from the chest. Now flip the switch and return to the main hall. Climb the stairs and destroy the suits of armor to reveal a pair of switch plates. Trigger them both and go back down to the main hall and exit the room to the left. Exit the dining room by the door in the lower left and continue as far left as you can go. Destroy the far-left suit of armor and use the barrel to reach the door. When you come to the next room, move the crates to find a barrel and place it on the lower portion of the steps in the upper left. Place the second barrel on the switch plate and go through the opening to the level above. Hit the switch plate there and return for the barrel on the switch plate below. Climb to the top of the stairs and use the three barrels to reach the ladder in the top right. Obtain the key from the chest and flip the lever to restart time. Jump on the moving switch plate to open the door at the bottom of the room and exit through it. Once outside, walk through the opening in the wall directly in front of you. Step on the switch you land next to and the first of the six candelabras will be extinguished. Walk through the open door and follow the hallway. In the next room, walk down and flip the lever, opening the door in front of you. This door opens into a previously visited room and instead of entering it, you will want to walk back up the stairs and to the right. This puts you outside again and I would suggest heading for the door at the top of the stairs. At this point I leave the remainder of Alundra's quest in your capable hands. Good luck!



FINAL FANTASY TACTICS™

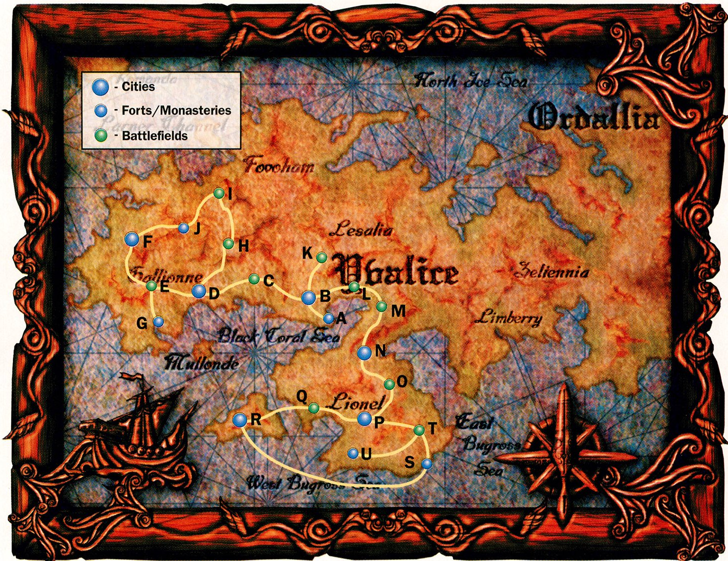
by Dave Malec

For those of you who crave the sound of clashing swords and get caught up in the heat of the battle, Squaresoft has just the thing to satisfy your hunger. Final Fantasy Tactics will challenge you to take more than your sword and a large dose of testosterone to the battlefield. While powerful characters are essential, smart thinking may be what ultimately gets you through. The beauty of this game is that there isn't just one right way to approach it. Everyone will develop a personal style that works for them. Unfortunately, that makes my job a little tough. So what I've decided to do is give you an overview of the principles used throughout the game. There are also individual strategies to five of the hardest battles in the first two chapters of the game. Hopefully this will give you an adequate jump-start for what lies ahead.

MAP KEY

These are the sites of the cities and battles of Chapters 1 and 2.

A - Orbonne Monastery
B - Dorter Trade City
C - Sweegy Woods
D - Gariland Magic City
E - Mandalia Plains
F - Igros Castle
G - Thieves Fort
H - Lenalia Plateau
I - Fovoham Plains
J - Fort Zeakden
K - Zeklaus Desert
L - Araguay Woods
M - Zirekile Falls
N - Zaland Fort City
O - Barius Hill
P - Lionel Castle
Q - Zigolis Swamp
R - Goug Machine City
S - Warjilis Trade City
T - Bariaus Valley
U - Golgorand Execution Site


● - Cities
● - Forts/Monasteries
● - Battlefields
North Ice Sea
Ordallia
Fovoham
Lesalia
Ivalice
Zeltennia
Limberry
Gallionne
Black Coral Sea
Mullonde
Lionel
East Bugross Sea
West Bugross Sea
A
B
C
D
E
F
G
H
I
J
K
L
M
N
O
P
Q
R
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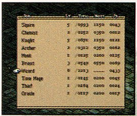
U

CHARACTER JOBS

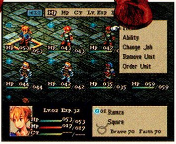
Throughout the world of Final Fantasy Tactics, you will have the opportunity to change your characters' classes. There isn't a formula for the perfect party and your selection of characters will vary from the next guy. Each character will begin with a Level 1 Job, either a Squire or a Chemist, and will be able to obtain additional Jobs as he/she uses his/her skills. When a character uses a skill he or she will gain Job Points (JP). To learn new attacks and other abilities, you will need to meet the required number of points. Mastering a specific Job means that you have learned all of the available skills. There doesn't seem to be any other advantage to it, though. Try advancing your characters evenly in a couple of Jobs, making them as well-rounded as possible. The following list shows the progression of Jobs by level and some of the more useful skills that I would recommend learning.



Job	Lv.	Total	Next	JP
Squire	5	/0993	1250	0043
Chemist	2	/0252	0350	0012
Knight	5	/0871	1250	0121
Archer	2	/0312	0350	0062
Monk	1	/0125	0200	0125
Priest	3	/0549	0550	0069
Wizard	8	/2213	----	0433
Time Mage	1	/0145	0200	0045
Thief	1	/0264	0200	0024
Oracle	1	/0117	0200	0017

Lv.18 Exp.00
HP 150/150
MP 047/047
CT
04 Gordon
Wizard
Brave 52 Faith 70
Knight

JOB	LEVEL REQUIRED	BEST SKILLS
Squire	None	Dash, Gained JP Up, Move+1
Chemist	**None**	**Hi-Potion, Phoenix Down, Move-Find Item**
Knight	Level 2 Squire	Head Break, Armor Break, Shield Break, Weapon Guard
Archer	**Level 2 Squire**	**Charge+2, Jump+1**
Monk	Level 2 Knight	Wave Fist, Martial Arts, Move HP Up
Priest	**Level 2 Chemist**	**Cure 2, Raise 2, Holy**
Wizard	Level 2 Chemist	Bolt 3, Fire 3, Frog, Death
Time Mage	**Level 2 Wizard**	**Haste, Don't Move, Meteor, Teleport**
Summoner	Level 2 Time Mage	Shiva, Titan, MP Switch, Leviathan
Thief	**Level 2 Archer**	**Any Steal skill, particularly Steal Heart, Move+2, Jump+2**
Mediator	Level 2 Oracle	Invitation, Praise, Death Sentence
Geomancer	**Level 3 Monk**	**Attack Up, Sand Storm, Quicksand, Any Ground**
Lancer	Level 3 Thief	Level Jump 8, Vertical Jump 8
Samurai	**Level 3 Knight Level 4 Monk Level 2 Lancer**	**Heaven's Cloud, Koutetsu, Murasame**
Ninja	Level 3 Archer Level 4 Thief Level 2 Geomancer	Shuriken, Ball, Ninja Sword, Two Swords
Calculator	**Level 4 Priest Level 4 Wizard Level 3 Time Mage Level 3 Oracle**	**Damage Split, Move-Get Experience**
Dancer	Level 4 Geomancer Level 4 Lancer	Wiznaibus, Slow Dance, Fly, Jump+3
Bard	**Level 4 Summoner Level 4 Mediator**	**Life, Nameless, Last Song, Move+3, Fly**
Mime	Level 8 Squire Level 8 Chemist Level 4 Summoner Level 4 Mediator Level 4 Geomancer Level 4 Lancer	The Mime's skills are equal to those which he mimics.



GENERAL TECHNIQUES

Every battle in Final Fantasy Tactics will differ depending on the individual playing, your party formation and your favorite technique for dealing with the enemy. There are, however, certain ways to approach each battle which will help improve your chances of a positive outcome. The following tips will give you a handle on the art of war in Final Fantasy Tactics.

THE TERRAIN

The lay of the land will play a part in your skirmishes with the enemy. The distance that a unit can move, as well as the height they can jump, will affect your approach to a battle. The greater the characters' mobility the better and it may prove to be the key to victory. Use high ground to your advantage, especially when deploying units with crossbows and other long-range attacks. Spell casting can suffer, though, losing horizontal range due to the increased height. Be sure to take the terrain into consideration.

10 5h
Enemy
07/11 Lv.15 Exp.64
HP 121/121
MP 010/010
CT 019/100

BRAVE AND FAITH

Characters with high Brave points can become more powerful and accurate when using specific attacks. Low Brave points may result in a unit retreating when injured during a battle. Faith points reflect a character's ability to understand and receive magic. Their casting power is enhanced with and take greater advantage of defensive spells. On the down side, they are also inflicted with greater damage when attacked with magic. This is definitely something to look at when purchasing new troops.

LEVEL BUILDING:

Plain and simple, the more you fight, the stronger your character becomes. In addition to sending units out on missions (see Propositions), return to previous battlefields to fight the residents of the countryside. These areas are great for gaining JP and experience. Choose a mixture of strong and weak units and let the latter do most of the work. If they get in trouble, your more powerful players can step in to break it up.

MAGIC TACTICS:

When using magic, some spells will ask if you want to cast it on the unit or the panel. Which one do you choose? Well, there are pros and cons to both. If you pick the unit, you are sure to hit them. The only problem is that they may move close to one of your one units, causing you to inflict damage on them as well. Use this to your advantage when it is inevitable that your targeted character is going to die. I've taken out more enemies with this technique. Choosing a specific panel ensures that your group is safe, but risks the enemy moving out of range. Most magic attacks will require a certain amount of Charge Time. This will leave the caster extremely vulnerable to any kind of attacks, particularly physical attacks. Needless to say, move as far away from the enemy as possible once the spell has been chosen.

CHECK YOUR STATS:

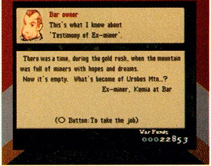
The game includes many menus and screens eluding to the status of your characters. It is to your advantage to consult them frequently. Bring up the Status Menu during a battle to check on the enemies' skills. There is also a handy Attack Menu, indicating the order in which the attacks will occur and who has been targeted for an attack. If you know a particular unit is going to get rocked by Bolt 2, make sure that you can get the most out of them before they do.

LIFE CRYSTALS:

When a player dies, their body will turn into a crystal. Collect these to recover HP and MP or to learn new abilities. If you have the same class of character in your party, have them collect the crystal to obtain a new skill. It may benefit you to keep one enemy alive in order to grab some free abilities.

PROPOSITIONS

Starting in Chapter 2, you will have the option to send your troops to do some odd jobs. Check with the bartender at each of the cities to see if he has any offers. After you accept a mission, you must choose three characters to go. You must also choose the number of days they will be gone. Choosing more has a higher rate of success. These missions will not only get you extra Gil, but will occasionally reward you with otherwise unattainable items. One day will pass as you move between points on the map. Move back and forth between two points to avoid monster attacks or use the time to build up other members of your party.



Bar owner
This's what I know about
'Testimony of Ex-miner'.

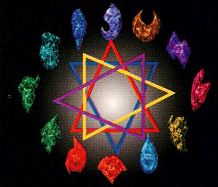
There was a time, during the gold rush, when the mountain was full of miners with hopes and dreams.
Now it's empty. What's become of Urobos Mtn...?
Ex-miner, Kemia at Bar

(○ Button:To take the job)

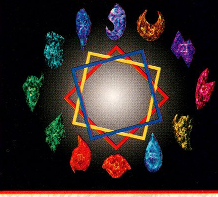
THE ZODIAC:

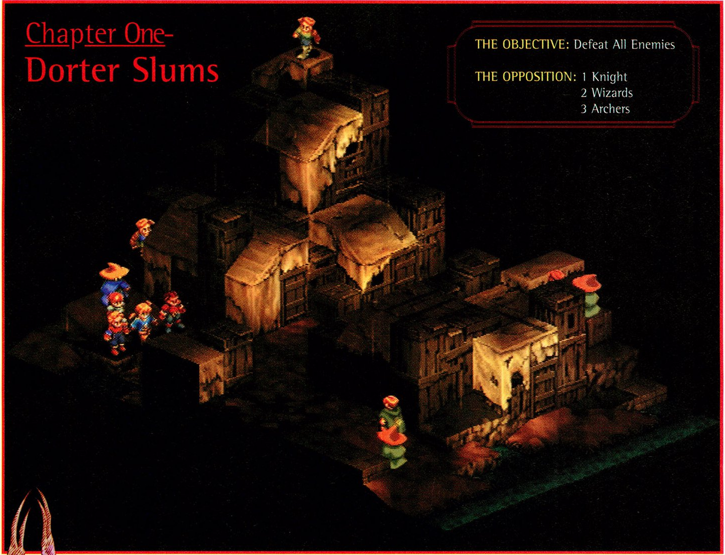
Every character has one of the 12 zodiac signs. Some of these units share a "good affinity" with others. If a unit attacks another of the same affinity, they will do greater damage. In the same respect, when forming a party for battle, try grouping units together who have a good affinity between them. Unfortunately you have to take the good with the bad. If your unit has a bad affinity with another, your damage won't be as great. Characters of the same gender with a bad affinity will do the least amount of damage.

GOOD AFFINITY



BAD AFFINITY





Chapter One-
Dorter Slums

THE OBJECTIVE: Defeat All Enemies

THE OPPOSITION: 1 Knight
2 Wizards
3 Archers

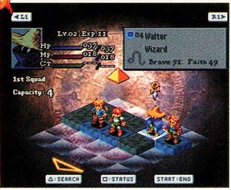
RECOMMENDED PARTY:

This battle was the first one to give me a headache, and I somehow feel overqualified to point out what not to do. Delita and Algus will be joining your party in this battle. Set Delita up with Black Magic and have at least one Archer in the group. Back them up with one of your stronger Knights or Squires. Keeping a Chemist handy isn't a bad idea, but I found that setting a couple of characters up to use items was enough. This will give you some additional offensive power.

Menu
Move
Act
Wait
Status
Auto-battle
01/12 Lv.02 Exp.11
HP 031/037
MP 018/018
CT 100/100
04Walter
Wizard
Brave 71 Faith 49

3h
HP 038/038
MP 018/018
CT 022/100
08/12 Lv.02 Exp.37

FORMATION


L1
R1
Lv.02 Exp.11
HP 037/037
MP 018/018
CT
04 Walter
Wizard
Brave 71 Faith 49
1st Squad
Capacity: 4
△:SEARCH
□:STATUS
START:END

THE BATTLE PLANS:

For starters, I suggest placing your Archers and Wizards in the top-right of the formation. This gives them the chance to advance to high ground quickly. Delita and Algus will head straight for the Archer on the highest building. Having either of them skilled with a long-range attack will save you a lot of grief. Leave your Knights or Squires where they are until the next move. This will allow the enemy Wizard to get into range, while your other troops take up position on higher ground. He and the Knight will be the priority for your ground forces to dispose of. The slightly elevated areas are perfect to throw stones from, increasing the amount of damage inflicted. In the meantime, establish the rest of your party on the raised area to the right. The height will give them greater range to use their abilities. As the rest of the Archers and second Wizard converge upon this group, use Black Magic and arrows to weaken them.

TREASURE

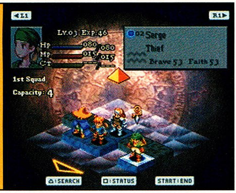
GIL EARNED:

2,100

WAR TROPHIES:

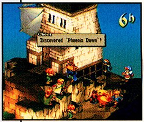
500 Gil
Iron Sword
Linen Robe
Ether

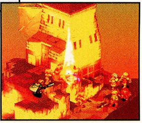
FORMATION


L1
R1
Lv.03 Exp.46
Hp 080/080
Mp 015/015
CT
02 Serge
Thief
Brave 53 Faith 53
1st Squad
Capacity: 4
△:SEARCH
□:STATUS
START:END

RECOMMENDED PARTY:

I definitely like a strong Wizard along when tackling this battle, preferably one capable of casting Bolt 2. Chemists and Priests can be useful if you are in a bind, but are not essential. This tends to be more of a complete offensive assault, requiring the skills of all of your heavy hitters. If you have a Thief in your party, you may be able to get some use out of the Charm ability. For the most part, though, you will want the group you take in to look something like an offensive line.


6h
Check
Discovered 'Phoenix Down'!



THE BATTLE PLANS:

There is nothing easy about this battle. The battlefield is substantially smaller than others, making movement more restrictive. Wiegraf wields a Holy Sword, capable of doing some serious damage. He has the power to take out each of your characters with a single blow and can even stop your characters in their tracks with his Stasis Sword attack. Usually the Chocobo will come forward due to its great travelling range. Take this opportunity to knock him out of the picture. If you allow him to linger, he will use Choco Cure to revitalize his injured comrades. The Monks can also cause considerable damage, but they won't be in range until the second attack round. Charm the Monks with your Thief and they will attack their own party. The real difference in this battle was realizing that just about all of my party had the use of Black Magic. This gave me additional range and allowed just about everyone to hit Wiegraf during the second attack round. Who says lightning never strikes the same place twice? Pummel him with Bolt attacks.

TREASURE

GIL EARNED:

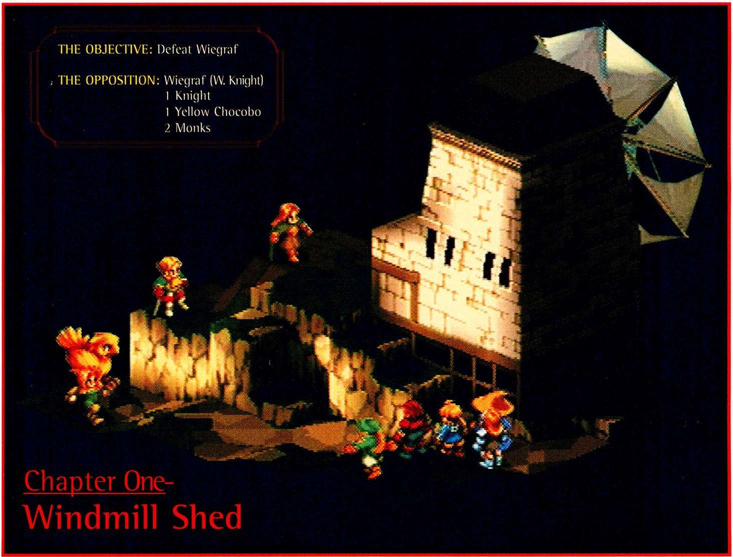
3,500

WAR TROPHIES:

Hi-Potion

***There's treasure hidden on the third step**

2.5h
09/10 Lv.03 Exp.60
Hp 080/080
Mp 015/015
CT 002/100

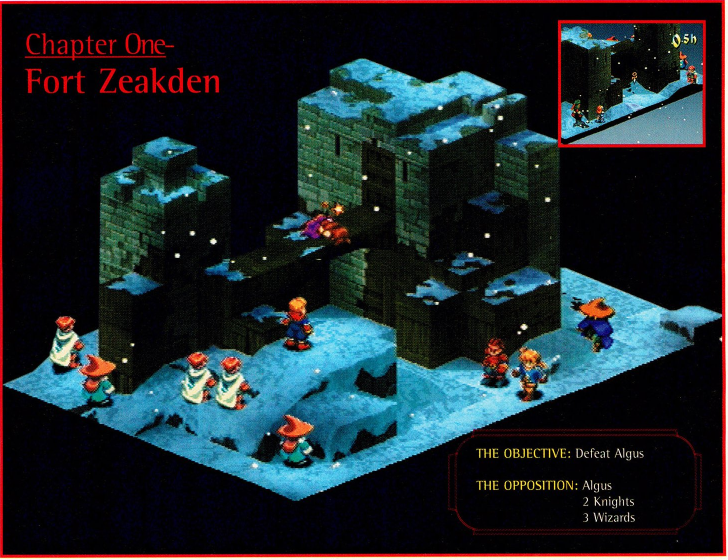


THE OBJECTIVE: Defeat Wiegraf

THE OPPOSITION:
Wiegraf (W. Knight)
1 Knight
1 Yellow Chocobo
2 Monks

Chapter One-
Windmill Shed

Chapter One-
Fort Zeakden



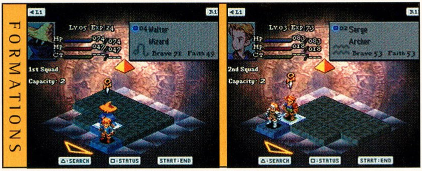
THE OBJECTIVE: Defeat Algus

THE OPPOSITION: Algus
2 Knights
3 Wizards

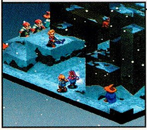
RECOMMENDED PARTY:

This battle requires you to split your party. I've met with the most success by placing a Wizard with Ramza. Delita will join Ramza's squad, and I would recommend equipping him with Battle Skills or Items. The second unit will be approaching from behind the main building. It will probably suit you best if it contains a Knight and either an Archer or a second Wizard.

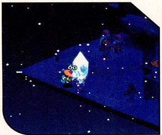
FORMATIONS


L1
R1
LV.05 EXP.24
HP 074/074
MP 047/047
CT
04 Walter
Wizard
Brave 71 Faith 49
1st Squad
Capacity: 2
△:SEARCH
□:STATUS
START:END
L1
R1
LV.03 EXP.73
HP 083/083
MP 018/018
CT
02 Serge
Archer
Brave 53 Faith 53
2nd Squad
Capacity: 2
△:SEARCH
□:STATUS
START:END

THE BATTLE PLANS:



Your focus is defeating Algus and he can be annoying. He is armed with a crossbow and will begin his attack by picking away at your party. Be aware that he is equipped with Auto-Potion and will heal himself when he gets hit. You probably won't get in any good shots at him for several attack rounds, so turn your focus to the Wizards. The one closest to Ramza should be your first target. The second Wizard tends to advance toward your second unit. Unfortunately, you will need to go through a Knight to get to him. My second unit usually doesn't get a chance to engage Algus, but I feel they've done their job if they can keep that Wizard out of my way. If you and Delita can take out the first Wizard, bring up your own Wizard after Algus. Hopefully he has learned at least one of the Level 2 spells by this time, and if not, you may want to advance him before trying this. Use the enemies' magic against them by relocating next to one of them when targeted with a spell. I've grown quite fond of equipping Ramza with Black Magic, finding the wide range of attacking powers extremely useful. With your victory against Algus here, the first chapter will end with a bang.



TREASURE

GIL EARNED:
7,200

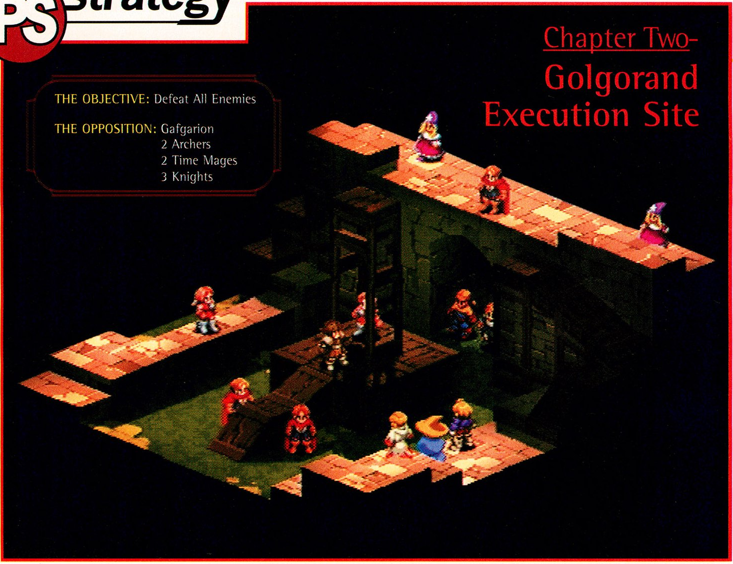
WAR TROPHIES:
None

Chapter Two-

Golgorand Execution Site

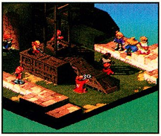
THE OBJECTIVE: Defeat All Enemies

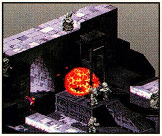
THE OPPOSITION: Gafgarion
2 Archers
2 Time Mages
3 Knights

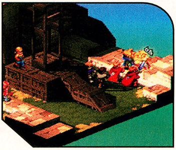


RECOMMENDED PARTY:

Here is another split-party formation. This battle vexed me for an entire afternoon until I came up with an adequate party. I placed a Wizard and a Priest with Ramza, both of which were at least Level 10. The second attack unit was comprised of Mustadio and Agrias. Mustadio had mastered his skills as an Engineer and found that to be the best Job for him. Agrias is powerful as a Holy Knight and that is probably the best Job for her.



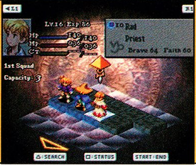


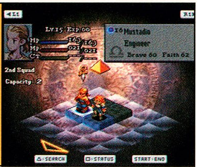


THE BATTLE PLANS:

Gafgarion is the most important enemy to dispose, and you must do it quickly. My Priest has the lowest HPs and it seems that Gafgarion will go for your weakest member first. The next step is to hit him with Bolt 3 or a comparable spell from your Wizard. This should just about kill him, allowing Ramza to clean up the leftovers. Leave him alive, and he will use his Night Sword to recover his health and inflict heavy damage. Use Agrias and Mustadio to take up positions on the platform in the center and then continue to move away from the high wall. This will lure the Time Mages to come down to engage you. They will still have pretty good range and will continue casting Haste and Slow to throw a wrench into your attack. Try to join your two units in the same area and then focus in on the Knights. They are capable of the most damage and have the highest HPs of the remaining enemies. Send Mustadio to the top of the wall for extra support once their forces have been depleted. From here out you just need to focus on the weakest lamb in the flock. You won't get any sympathy from me if it takes a while.

FORMATIONS


L1
R1
Lv.16 Exp.86
HP 140/140
MP 036/036
CT
10 Rad
Priest
Brave 64 Faith 60
1st Squad
Capacity: 3
△:SEARCH
□:STATUS
START:END


L1
R1
Lv.15 Exp.00
HP 163/163
MP 021/021
CT
16 Mustadio
Engineer
Brave 60 Faith 62
2nd Squad
Capacity: 2
△:SEARCH
□:STATUS
START:END

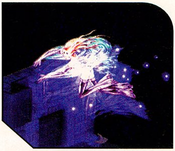
TREASURE

GIL EARNED:
12,200

WAR TROPHIES:
None

RECOMMENDED PARTY:

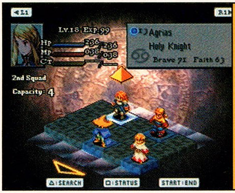
Here is yet another split formation. Ramza will be placed alone in the first attack unit. The most essential member to the second unit is a Wizard. Back him up with a Priest or Chemist to keep him healthy. Once again Mustadio and Agrias are the perfect complement to the rest of your squad.



THE BATTLE PLANS:

Gafgarion is back for his final battle and Ramza must face him alone. He will move in close to the door and attack Ramza. Once he has attacked, use your Wizard to reach Gafgarion with Bolt 3. This spell should do about 180 points of damage. He will be close to death at this point. Ramza should be able to finish him off in two turns, even after he regains some of his HPs with his Night Sword attack. Now, head straight for the gate to aid your comrades outside. Gafgarion's Life Crystal will only give you HP/MP if you collect it. Winning the battle outside the gate is contingent upon you taking out that Summoner before he starts unleashing his power. Shiva can be devastating to any of your characters that are charging at the time. Mustadio and Agrias will probably be the first to reach him and with any luck, should finish him in one turn. If not, spread your party to take a minimal amount of damage. Make good use of Agrias' Stasis Sword to hit multiple enemies. Once you are victorious, the last battle of the chapter takes place inside Lionel Castle. By now you should have a good grasp on the military tactics of the game. Enjoy the rest!

Rad
Life's refreshing breeze, heal from the sky! Cure2!



FORMATION

GIL EARNED:

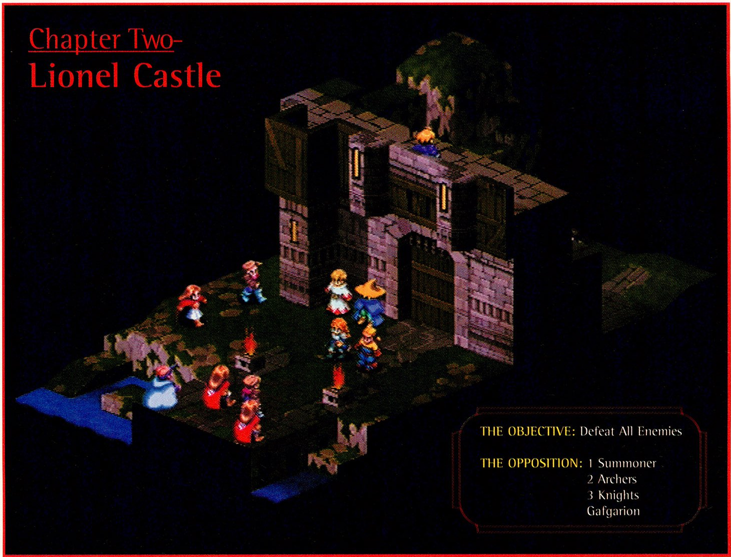
11,100

WAR TROPHIES:

700 Gil
Mythril Helmet

TREASURE

Chapter Two-
Lionel Castle



THE OBJECTIVE: Defeat All Enemies

THE OPPOSITION: 1 Summoner
2 Archers
3 Knights
Gafgarion

TRICKS of the trade

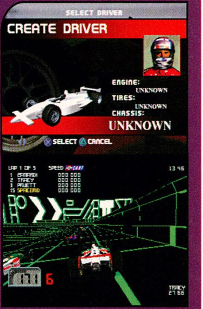
Codes and Tricks for the PlayStation

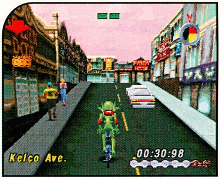
Cart World Series

Special password cheats

These cheats will get you some special-looking tracks and strange options for your car. On the Type Screen, choose a race (Single Race or New Season) and on the Select Driver Screen, move Left until you see "Create Driver." Now enter one of the passwords as shown to get the following results:

NIGHTRID - Drive at night.
SPACERID - Tron-like tracks.
GEK - You will race two laps in Season Mode.
WHEELS - There will be no body on your car.
FLOAT - Tracks will have half the normal gravity (you will have less traction than normal races).
RADBRAD - Tracks have more gravity than normal.
BANZAI - You won't collide with any other cars.


SELECT DRIVER
CREATE DRIVER
ENGINE: UNKNOWN
TIRES: UNKNOWN
CHASSIS: UNKNOWN
SELECT
CANCEL
LAP 1 OF 5
SPEED
1 ZAMPARDI
2 TRACY
3 PRUETT
15 SPACERID
TRACY


Kelco Ave.
00:30:98

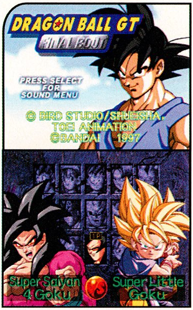
Courier Crisis

Play as an alien or a gorilla

Choose the Memory Card icon from the Main Menu and then access the Load/Save Options. Move over to Password and enter one of these codes under "Enter Password" to play as two strange, new couriers:

Play as the Alien - Put in the name XFIFTYONEX
Play as the Gorilla - Put in the name SAVAGEAPES

Dragon Ball GT: Final Bout


DRAGON BALL GT
FINAL BOUT
PRESS SELECT FOR SOUND MENU
© BIRD STUDIO/SHUEISHA, TOEI ANIMATION
©BANDAI 1997
Super Saiyan 4 Goku
Super Little Goku

Secret character

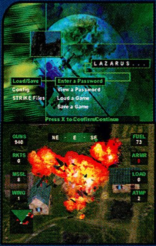
At the Title Screen, do the six-character code (Right, Left, Down, Up, Right, Left, Down, Up and you will hear a sound), then press Triangle 10 times and then Square nine times. You will hear another sound to confirm that it worked correctly. You will see Super Saiyan 4 Goku on the Menu Screen. On the Player Select Screen, he will be a selectable character in the lower-middle section of the screen!

Nuclear Strike

Password cheats

To get these cheats to work, you must go to the Main Menu and at the Load/Save option, choose "Enter a Password." Put in any of these for various results:

LAZARUS - Infinite Lives.
LIGHTNING - Secret Bonus Level.
EAGLEEYE - No one can shoot their weapons.
WARPDRIVE - Faster vehicles
WARRIOR - You get five extra attempts.
PHOENIX - You get four extra attempts.
MPG - Reduced fuel consumption.


LAZARUS...
Load/Save
Config
STRIKE Files
Enter a Password
View a Password
Load a Game
Save a Game
Press X to Confirm/Continue
GUNS
RKTS
MSSL
WING
FUEL
ARMR
LOAD
ATMP
NE
E
SE

Do you have a trick or want a tip on your favorite game? Let us know—write us at...

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine
Tricks of the Trade
1920 Highland Ave., Suite 222
Lombard, IL 60148

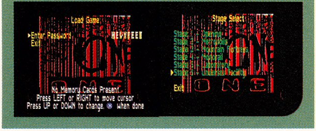
One

All weapons and Stage Select

At the Main Menu Screen, move over and choose the "Load Game" Option. Then pick "Enter Password." Put in one or both of these codes for the results as shown:

MAXPOWER - Gives you access to all the weapons.

HEVYFEET - Opens up the Stage Select Screen where you can choose to start from any of the six levels.


Load Game
▶Enter Password
Exit
HEVYFEET
No Memory Cards Present
Press LEFT or RIGHT to move cursor
Press UP or DOWN to change. ⊗ when done
Stage Select
Stage 1 - Opening
Stage 2 - Metropolis
Stage 3 - Mountain Fortress
Stage 4 - Monorail
Stage 5 - Laboratory
▶Stage 6 - Underground Facility
Exit
ONE

Monster Rancher

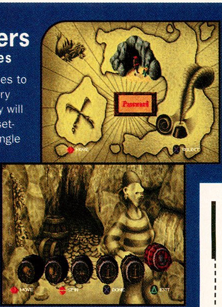
Build up loyalty meter

1000
wk.1 Apr
Are you going to take Oscar to the Ranch?
YES
NO
Schedule
Item
Data
Save
Town
Strict
45
2900G

Here is an easy way to build up your loyalty meter. Once you have your monster, take it back and forth between the ranch and the town. Each time you do this, your loyalty meter goes up five points! However, you must use this in moderation. The more you do this trick, the stricter your style will become. Your monster will have a tendency to run away and destroy its home if your style gets overbearing, so be warned!

Shipwreckers

Level Select codes

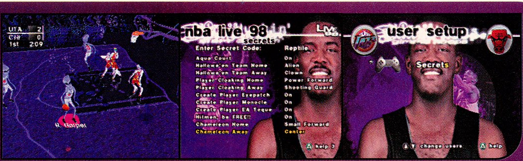

Password
MOVE
SELECT
MOVE
SPIN
DONE
EXIT

Enter the following codes to give you access to every level of the game. They will work on any difficulty setting. First, enter the Single Player Mode of the game. These codes will not be available for Multiplayer Mode. Now go to the Password Select Screen and enter the following:

Level 1-2: Ship, Skull, Fish, Anchor, Ship, Anchor
Level 1-3: Ship, Anchor, Skull, Ship, Anchor, Fish
Level 1-4: Skull, Ship, Fish, Anchor, Anchor, Ship
Level 2-1: Fish, Fish, Anchor, Ship, Skull, Anchor
Level 2-2: Skull, Anchor, Anchor, Fish, Anchor, Ship
Level 2-3: Fish, Anchor, Ship, Ship, Ship, Skull
Level 2-4: Anchor, Ship, Fish, Skull, Skull, Fish
Level 3-1: Ship, Skull, Skull, Fish, Anchor, Skull
Level 3-2: Fish, Skull, Anchor, Fish, Skull, Fish
Level 3-3: Fish, Fish, Ship, Skull, Fish, Ship
Level 3-4: Ship, Anchor, Ship, Fish, Anchor, Fish
Level 4-1: Skull, Skull, Anchor, Ship, Fish, Fish
Level 4-2: Ship, Anchor, Skull, Fish, Fish, Anchor
Level 4-3: Skull, Ship, Skull, Skull, Fish, Ship
Level 4-4: Ship, Fish, Ship, Fish, Ship, Anchor
Level 5-1: Anchor, Ship, Fish, Skull, Fish, Ship
Level 5-2: Fish, Ship, Anchor, Skull, Ship, Fish
Level 5-3: Ship, Fish, Skull, Anchor, Anchor, Skull
Level 5-4: Skull, Ship, Anchor, Fish, Ship, Skull

NBA Live '98

Easter egg codes

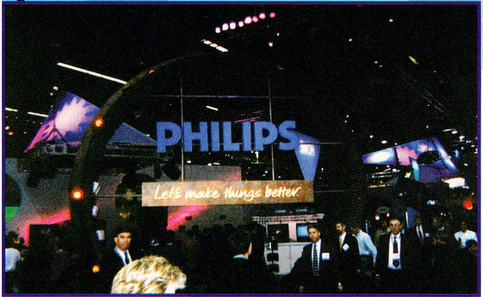

UTA 2
CHI 0
1st 2:09
R. Harper
nba live 98
secrets
LIVE 98
△ help 3
user setup
Secrets
▲▼ change users
△ help

Enter Secret Code:	Reptile
Aqua Court	On
Hallowe'en Team Home	Alien
Hallowe'en Team Away	Clown
Player Cloaking Home	Power Forward
Player Cloaking Away	Shooting Guard
Create Player Eyepatch	On
Create Player Monocle	On
Create Player EA Toque	On
Hitmen, be FREE!!	On
Chameleon Home	Small Forward
Chameleon Away	Center

To enable the Easter egg codes, begin a regular game (Exhibition, etc.), and after choosing your teams, go to the User Setup Screen. Choose "Start New" and enter the name: **Secrets.** Press Start to confirm the name then press the Circle button to activate the Secrets Menu. To enter the codes, go to Secrets Menu and highlight "Enter Secret Code" and press the X button. Now, enter the following codes—they are case sensitive, so enter them exactly as shown:

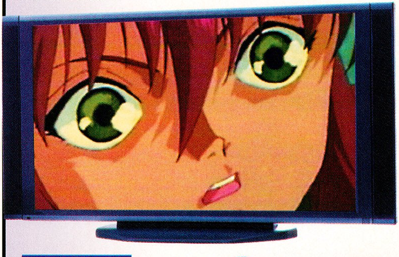
Seaweed (Underwater court)
Scary (Home team in Halloween costumes)
Freaky (Away team in Halloween costumes)
Cloak home (Home team selected player is invisible)
Cloak away (Away team selected player is invisible)
Eyepatch (Create player with eyepatch)
Monocle (Create player with monocle)
Toque (Create player EA Toque)
Prisoners (Hitmen be free)
Lizard (Chameleon Home Team)
Reptile (Chameleon Away Team)

1998 Winter Consumer Electronics Show



1998 International
CES

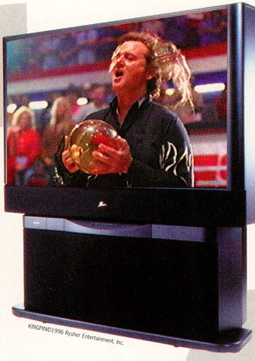
The Winter Consumer Electronics Show is always held in Las Vegas and this year was no different. An estimated 90,000 people attended this year's show which was not open to the public. You had to be either a member of the press or have something to do with the wholesale/retail side of things. All kinds of electronic product are debuted here for the first time ranging from the latest digital gadgets to the newest line of VCRs. Here's a rundown of the tastiest stuff.



Plasma Television
(above)
If you saw the movie *Contact*, you'll notice that Jodie Foster's character was contacted using a futuristic-looking television which was almost perfectly flat. Well, that's a real TV that can hang on a wall. The picture quality is getting to a point where it turns heads, but the prices are still prohibitive ($20,000!).

A brief CES remembrance

A couple of years ago, the bi-annual Consumer Electronics Show was not just the place to see the latest electronic gadgets, but also the hottest upcoming video games. Three years ago, the video game faction decided they needed their own event and thus the Electronics Entertainment Expo (E³) event was born. Of course it wasn't quite as simple as that, but it seemed like it to the normal Joe. This year's E³ will take place this May and will feature the latest and greatest in video games. We'll be there covering all the exciting PlayStation stuff. As you might have gleaned from our look into 1998 feature, many companies are withholding the names of some of their blockbuster titles that will be unveiled for the first time at the E³ show. It's important for these companies to make the biggest impact possible since the press will be there reporting the happenings, but retailers and wholesalers will also be carefully scrutinizing the hot titles they will want to order in bulk. The combination of these factors motivate companies to make the best showing possible.



KINGPIN©1996 Rysher Entertainment, Inc.

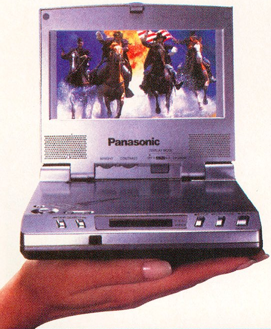
High Definition Television

This was the big focus for this CES although the technology won't be available to the consumer until later this year. It won't become affordable for another couple years, either. The prospect of crystal-clear television with the capacity to deliver three times the picture quality of conventional televisions is exciting. These sets will enable you to receive digital TV signals with CD-quality sound. The sets displayed at the show were still not in final production form, but they gave us a rough idea of what to expect. The first sets will be large projection-style sets with other smaller TV tube-type sets being released soon after.

HDTV
zenith

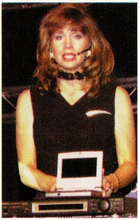
Panasonic Portable DVD player

We brought you the Samsung P-theater two issues back and now Panasonic unveils their portable model. Their version has a wide-screen (16:9 aspect ratio) LCD screen built in. As you can see from the picture to the left, it's extremely small and is smaller than most notebook PCs! You can hook this into a television and use it as a normal DVD player or take it on the road.



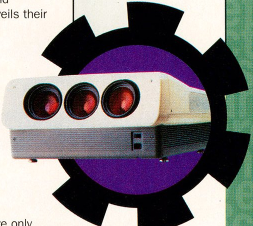
Mini-Disc Players

Up until now, Mini-Disc players have only been available here from Sony, but no more. Pioneer and other manufacturers are joining the fray and are out to convince you that you should be buying these things. Mini-Discs are kind of like recordable, more durable and compact versions of the CD. The main market for it is in making your own custom disc from your existing library of CDs for the ultimate in quality and convenience. Look for a hands-on test of MDs in GEAR soon.

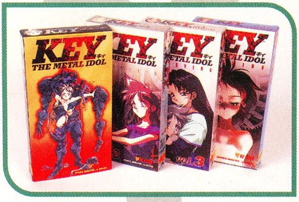


Misc. Gadgets

Among the other noteworthy stuff are a wide range of second- and third-generation DVD players. All kinds of new features are set to be implemented. Going to the opposite end of the spectrum, there were some downright bizarre things shown as well. One of the most disturbing were molded plastic speakers in the image of Michael Jackson! Wooooh! Equally scary was a guard owl that emits invisible beams from its eyes which detects movement. Whoooo!



Manga Video

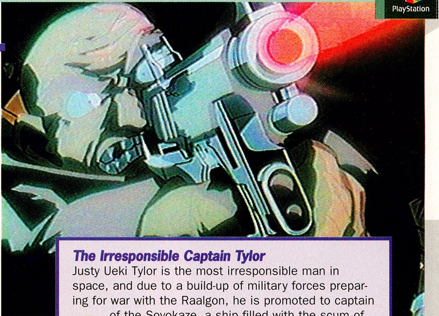


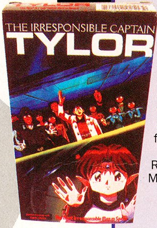
Key The Metal Idol Vols. 1-4

Viz's translation of *Key the Metal Idol* is easily one of the company's best dub jobs ever. Both the dialogue and songs have been set to English and the voice acting is second to only Animeigo's dubs. This story of a robotic girl who wishes to become human will immediately grip you from the first tape and never let go. A good mix of "evil corporation" science fiction and "I wanna be human" drama. Key's animation is also top-notch.

Anyone who likes a little mystery and science fiction mixed in with a touching story should check out Key. You won't be disappointed.

Viz Video
MSRP: $24.95 (dub), $29.95 (sub)
Approx. 90 min. (Vol. 1), 52 min. (Vols. 2-4)





The Irresponsible Captain Tylor

Justy Ueki Tylor is the most irresponsible man in space, and due to a build-up of military forces preparing for war with the Raalgon, he is promoted to captain of the Soyokaze, a ship filled with the scum of the United Planets Space Force. Tylor manages to screw up every possible situation, but somehow it always comes out right.

A good mix of comedy and mecha/space fighting action, Tylor's "without care" attitude is frustrating to watch, yet has often amazing outcomes ("How could he possibly get out of THIS?"). With four TV episodes on a tape at such a good price, *Tylor* comes highly recommended for any action/comedy anime fans.

Right Stuf International
MSRP: $19.95 (sub) Approx. 100 minutes

Voltron Lives

He's back! One of the most popular cartoon/toy series has re-emerged. Trendmasters has done up a new Voltron toy which is basically the same model cast as the Matchbox (the original manufacturers) version with a couple of differences. They kind of cheaped out and didn't include all the shooting weapons and some of the parts are plastic instead of die-cast metal. Still, it is an awesome toy that easily kicks most of the stuff that's out in toy stores' ass. Go get one!

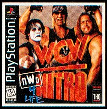
Trendmasters $29.95

Win a trip to any WCW event of your choice and meet the hottest stars in wrestling

WCW NITRO

nWo™

HOLLYWO
nWo



**Send your name, address, and telephone number on a postcard to:
"WCW Nitro Sweepstakes,"
5016 North Parkway Calabasas,
Suite 100, Calabasas, CA 91302.
Entries must be received by March 31st**

Grand Prize

A Trip for two to WCW match including airfare, hotel accomodations, rental car, $300 spending money, an autographed copy of the game, and a WCW T-shirt.

First Prize

Autographed copy of the game, and a WCW T-shirt.

Second Prize WCW T-shirt

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine THQ Inc. INLAND ProductionS

Sweepstakes Rules:

1. No purchase necessary: To enter, send a standard-size postcard containing name, address and phone number to "WCW Nitro Sweepstakes," 5016 North Parkway Calabasas, Suite 100, Calabasas, CA 91302. No purchase or payment of any money is necessary to enter. One entry per household. All entries must be handwritten. Mechanically reproduced entries will not be accepted. Entries must be received by March 31, 1998. All entries become exclusive property of T*HQ, Inc. and will not be acknowledged or returned. Sponsor assumes no responsibility for lost, mutilated, late, illegible, incomplete, postage-due or misdirected entries. Only one prize per family, organization or household.
2. Prizes: 1 Grand Prize: Grand Prize winner will receive a trip for two to a WCW event of the Winner's choice, including air transportation for two, hotel accommodations for two people (one room) for 2 nights selected by Sponsor, rental car for 2 days, two passes to the WCW event, and its associated official party (if any), $300 spending money, an autographed copy of WCW Nitro game and a WCW T-shirt. Grand prize has an approximate retail value of $2,070. At Sponsor's sole option, Sponsor may provide up to $1,500 to the Grand Prize winner in lieu of providing travel tickets, rental car and hotel accommodations. 5 First Prize winners will receive one (1) autographed copy of WCW Nitro game and one (1) WCW T-shirt. First Prize has an approximate retail value of $170. 10 Second Prizes: 10 Second Prize winners will receive (1) one WCW T-shirt. Second Prize has an approximate value of $20.00. Winners will be determined by a random drawing from all valid entries by Sponsor whose decisions are final. Drawing to be held on or about April 7. All prizes will be awarded. All other prize winners will be notified by mail. Prize(s) are non-transferable. No substitutions of prize(s) are allowed, except at the option of Sponsor should the featured prizes(s) become unavailable.
3. Odds of Winning: The odds of winning will be determined by number of valid entries received.
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5. Winners List: For a list of winners, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to "WCW Nitro Sweepstakes Winners List," 5016 North Parkway Calabasas, Suite 100, Calabasas, CA 91302. Requests for winners list must be received by May 30, 1998. Allow 4 weeks for delivery of winners list.
6. Restrictions: Void where prohibited or restricted by law. All federal, state and local regulations apply.
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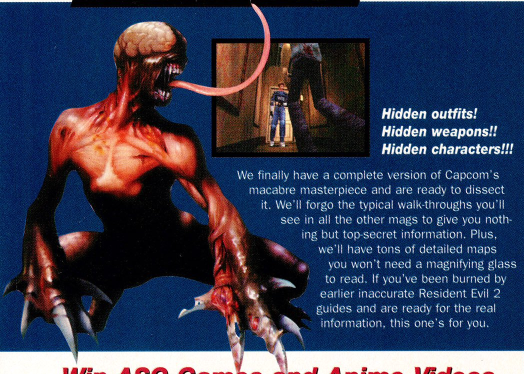
Next Month

in the Official U.S. Playstation Magazine

Killer Resident Evil 2 Strategy



Hidden outfits!
Hidden weapons!!
Hidden characters!!!

We finally have a complete version of Capcom's macabre masterpiece and are ready to dissect it. We'll forgo the typical walk-throughs you'll see in all the other mags to give you nothing but top-secret information. Plus, we'll have tons of detailed maps you won't need a magnifying glass to read. If you've been burned by earlier inaccurate Resident Evil 2 guides and are ready for the real information, this one's for you.

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Official Sweepstakes Rules:
1. No Purchase Necessary: To enter, send a letter or standard size postcard containing your name, address, and phone number together with your list of 10 most wanted video games to Top Ten Most Wanted, Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine, 1920 Highland Avenue, Suite 222, Lombard, Illinois 60148 or e-mail it to dindo_perez@zd.com or fax it to (630) 916-7227. No purchase or payment of any money is necessary to enter. One entry per household per month. Entries must be received by the 10th day of the month for the next available issue of OPM. All entries become exclusive property of Ziff-Davis and will not be acknowledged or returned. Ziff-Davis assumes no responsibility for lost, mutilated, late, illegible, incomplete, postage-due, or misdirected entries. Sponsors reserve the right to cancel this contest at any time with appropriate notice. Only one prize per family, organization, or household per month. **2.** Prizes: One Grand Prize winner will receive one (1) video game as determined by ASC Games. Grand Prize has an approximate retail value of $45. Winners shall be determined by a random drawing of all valid entries by OPM editors whose decisions are final. All prize winners will be notified by mail. Prize(s) are non-transferable. No substitutions of prize(s) are allowed, except at the option of Sponsors should the featured prizes become unavailable. **3.** Odds of Winning: The number of winners and the odds of winning will be determined by number of valid entries received. **4.** Eligibility: Contest open to residents of United States and Canada. Void in Quebec. Non-compliance with the time parameters contained herein or return of any prize/prize notification as undeliverable will result in disqualification. Winners or their legal guardians shall sign an affidavit of eligibility/release of liability/prize acceptance within 5 days of receipt or forfeit prize. By acceptance of prize, winner(s) agree to the use of their name and/or likeness for purposes of advertising, trade, or promotion without further compensation, unless prohibited by law. Neither Ziff-Davis Inc., ASC Games nor their respective affiliates, subsidiaries, divisions, or related companies are responsible or liable for any damages, taxes, or expenses that consumers might incur as a result of this contest or receipt of prize **5.** Winners List: For a list of winners, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope identifying the month for which the winners list is requested to Top 10 Most Wanted Winners List, 1920 Highland Avenue, Suite 222, Lombard, Illinois 601448. Allow 4 weeks for delivery of winners list **6.** Restrictions: Void where prohibited or restricted by law. All federal, state and local regulations apply.

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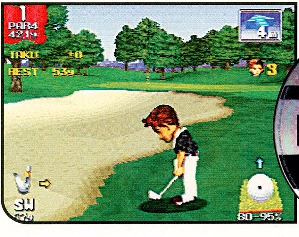

Hot Shots Golf

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- Blasto
- WCW Nitro
- Pitfall 3D
- ONE
- Grandstream Saga

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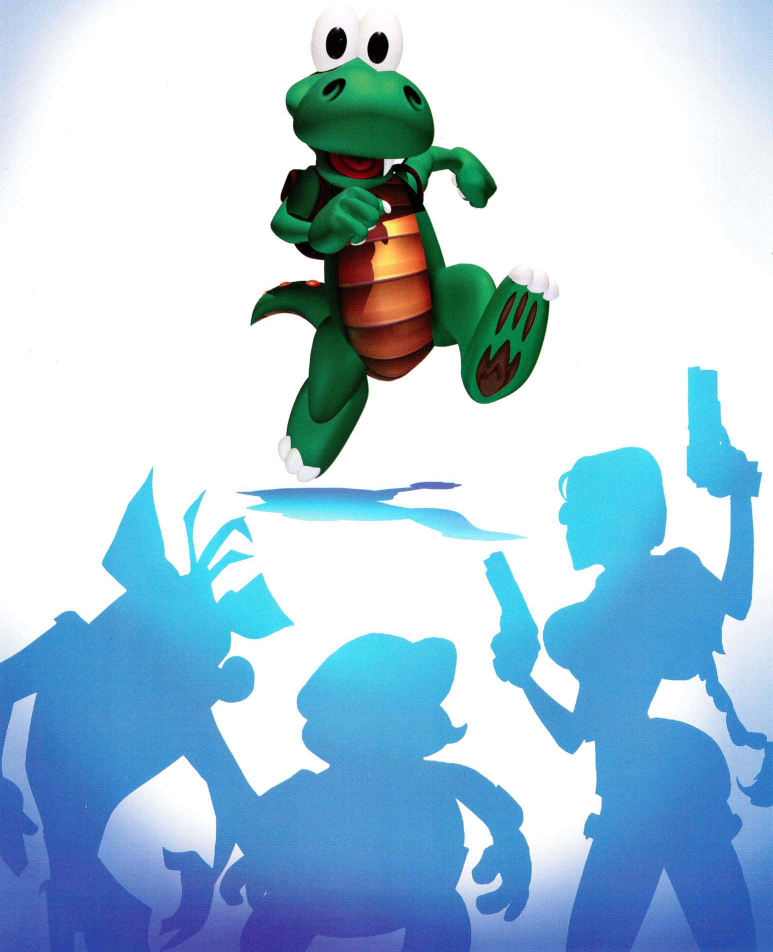

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-PSM-PlayStation Magazine

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-Official PlayStation Magazine

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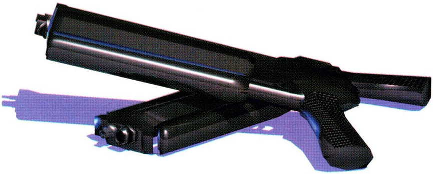

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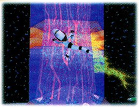

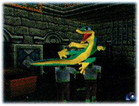

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